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MR. PHELPS AS WOLSEY.

"Farewell! a long farewell to all my greatness!"

From the original life-sized portrait, by Johnston Forbes-Robertson, by kind permission of the Garrick Club.

THE LIFE AND LIFE-WORK
OF
SAMUEL PHELPS

THE LIFE AND LIFE-WORK

OF

SAMUEL PHELPS

BY HIS NEPHEW

W. MAY PHELPS

AND

JOHN FORBES-ROBERTSON

WITH

Three Portraits

AND

COPIES OF LETTERS FROM MEN OF EMINENCE

AND OTHER ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS OF INTEREST TO PLAY-GOERS

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LONDON

SAMPSON LOW, MARSTON, SEARLE, & RIVINGTON
CROWN BUILDINGS, FLEET STREET

1886

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RICHARD CLAY & SONS,
BREAD STREET HILL, LONDON,
Bungay, Suffolk.

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TO
THE PLAY-GOERS OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

This Memoir

OF ONE WHO SPENT A LIFE-TIME
IN ENDEAVOURING TO MAKE THEM ACQUAINTED WITH
THE WORKS OF

The Great Poet of all Time

IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED BY THEIR SERVANTS

THE AUTHORS

PREFACE.

ON the death of Samuel Phelps, it was understood by the family that his nephew and the writer of these lines should attempt to set forth his life and labours.

Joint efforts of the kind are not always crowned with success, and possibly this will be added to the category. But the intimate relations long subsisting between Mr. May Phelps and his distinguished uncle, and the more than ordinary interest shared by his coadjutor in all things dramatic, and especially in the career of Mr. Phelps, ever since he became lessee of Sadler's Wells, led both writers to hope that their combined endeavours to illustrate, by the present memoir, a most important period in the history of the English Stage, would not be altogether unwelcome to the lovers of the acted drama.

For the great mass of facts and dates my fellow-worker must have all the credit, and for their setting forth I am mainly responsible.

At the same time, I take this opportunity of stating, that, without the enthusiastic and unremitting labours of Mr. May Phelps, this book had never been written. My proper function would, perhaps, be better expressed by the word "editor."

For permission to use the various letters inserted in this work our best thanks are due to Mrs. Macready, widow of the tragedian, Jonathan Macready, Esq., F.R.C.S., and Sir Frederick Pollock, Bart., Representatives of William Charles Macready; to Miss Hogarth, Executrix of Charles Dickens; to the Hon. Mr. Justice Chitty, and the Right Hon. the Earl of Lytton, Executors of John Forster; to the Right Hon. the Earl of

Lytton, Executor of his father, Lord Lytton; and to James Logan White, Esq., Executor of the Rev. James White.

If the judgments and opinions, which we have now and then ventured to give, appear to embody rather too much of the besetting sin of biographers, they have not been arrived at without the careful weighing and comparing of our various experiences and impressions.

The many Press notices inserted in the work will, doubtless, be regarded by some as padding; but as it was part of our scheme to give the full body and pressure of the time in respect of dramatic criticism, and especially as we regard most of the utterances as part and parcel of the current literature of the period, which, but for this conservation, would have been, in a manner, lost to the world, we thought it better to let such eminent masters of their craft as John Oxenford, F. G. Tomlins, John A. Heraud, Douglas Jerrold, Stirling Coyne, E. L. Blanchard, Bayle Bernard, and Professor Morley speak out of the abundance of their knowledge and experience. Their testimony is all the more important as Mr. Phelps was never known to court the Press in any way.

But apart from any literary character they may possibly claim, these notices throw much incidental light on the customs and conditions of the then theatrical world, and reveal thereby touches of local colouring which the future historian of the British Stage will know how to appreciate.

Mr. Phelps entered the scenic arena at a time of painful, and almost humiliating, transition, and hesitated not to take up the gage against the meretricious tendency of the times, and against every phase, both before and behind the curtain, of theatrical folly and vice.

Other names are honourably associated with the like lofty purpose; but it was not given either to Mr. Macready or Mr. Charles Kean to carry out their designs to so practical and abiding a result, from the simple circumstance that their reign, as managers, was comparatively brief.

Let no one who has not seen him at his best—from 1840 to 1862—and we have no right to judge any man but by his best—say that we have exaggerated either the services or the merits of Samuel Phelps. Only those who are keenly gifted with the dramatic sense, and have made the rational amusement of the people the devoted study of years, can adequately appreciate the arduousness of the former, and the wonderful variety and surpassing excellence of the latter.

That he did much for the intellectual pleasure and elevation of those of his day and generation none can doubt; and more will assuredly be accomplished when the State ceases to vex, if not disgrace, the age by allowing such services to go unrecognized and unhonoured; and especially when the Church, following the lead of the more catholic-souled of her prelates,* enters into active alliance with such men as Samuel Phelps.

It is unnecessary to speak here of the solicitude of the antique world for everything affecting the interests of the drama, whose written survivals still constitute, as it were, a field sacred to Apollo, whereon the learned of all lands hold tourney, when they would prove their claims to the laurels of classic scholarship. A like honour by nations yet unborn, we may rest well assured, awaits Shakespeare and his fellows. But, without forestalling the future, or harking back to the distant past, we have examples nearer our own time of intelligent appreciation of the drama's great educational value.

The Mediæval Church had a practical understanding of all this, whether the abbeys and minsters scattered over England, and with which it is still glorified, be monuments of the fervid piety and free-will offerings of the people, or only of the exactions of those in power, jealous for God's glory, and not, perhaps, unmindful of their own. The religious world of to-day would have a beneficent knowledge of it, too, were it not for the lingering dregs of that Puritanic fever which afflicted the land in the seventeenth century, and whose recurrence, in a

* See Archbishop Tait's remarks on this subject at p. 14.

more or less aggravated form, can never be regarded as altogether beyond the bounds of possibility, so long as popular emotion, when divorced from common-sense, is apt to expend itself in periodic fits of destructive insanity.

We must not forget, however, though at the risk of repeating what is familiar and trite, that all men, movements, and manias have their mission; and that even the "righteous over-much," or, as another inspired writer calls them, "the unco guid," have something to say—or piously believe they have—for the unconscionable presumption of those "rebukes," with which they so persistently arrest and smother the natural, God-given, joy of the human heart.

When the two great institutions, then,—the Church and the Stage,—whose united function it is to lift us into the higher and cheerier life, are at one, and the ministry of the priest is as earnest as that of the player, and the latter, as well as the former, receives from the State his due meed of countenance and honour,—then, and only then, may we hope to see light in dark places, and a worthy crowning to national education, whether the studies of our youth have been necessarily confined to the Board-school, or have happily been pursued under the fostering care of an *Alma mater*.

All the strengthening hopes and possibilities just indicated, and which will one day become to the people grateful actualities, were ever present to the mind of our master.

As a manager and actor, determined to give of his best to the public, and put into his work his whole heart and soul and strength, Samuel Phelps was without fear; and, as a man, without reproach. In every relation of life he was tender, dignified, and righteous; and in what pertained to the traditions and glory of the English stage, he was the last of all the Romans.

JOHN FORBES-ROBERTSON.

25, Charlotte Street, Bloomsbury,
25th June, 1886.

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LIFE AND LIFE-WORK

OF

SAMUEL PHELPS.

INTRODUCTION.

SAMUEL PHELPS inherited the instincts of a gentleman, and throughout the whole of his career he never forgot that he was one. He was, therefore, of good family, and, though not what is called college-bred, of good education. He was a doting husband and father and a fast friend. Exceedingly fond of children, he would often take an infant out of the arms of any nurse he might meet in his walks and kiss it.

Attached to his home, he would rather dine with his family on plain fare than sit down to a banquet without them. Not that he by any means despised good things; for, when they came in his way, nothing pleased him more than having a few friends round his table to share them with him.

He had a great liking for gardening and even agriculture, and, had he been able to retire early in life, he would have made a good country gentleman. At Chelsea, where he resided from 1840 to 1844, he had a large piece of ground attached to his house, where he grew some beautiful specimens of choice flowers and plants, giving them his own personal attention. He was as pleased with his achievements in this way as he was with his success on the stage.

His gardener for the greater part of this period was an

Irishman, who had held the same position at William Cobbett's some years before, and was mightily proud of both his masters, as he told one of the present writers.

The Lion Hotel, Farningham, Kent, was his principal residence when fishing or shooting. He spent more time in that county than in any other part of the kingdom, and he was known to all the farmers round about. He took great interest in all that pertained to their welfare, and even went so far out of his usual custom as to take the chair at some of their club dinners, when held at this house. They had no idea who he was, and simply regarded him as a sportsman, who liked to mix in their society.

E. L. Blanchard, in an obituary notice of him at the end of the book, tells an anecdote of one of them discovering him, to his great astonishment, as the Doge of Venice, when he brought his family up to see that piece at Drury Lane Theatre in 1867. Mr. Phelps had no wish ever to be lionized, and no doubt told the proprietor of the Lion Hotel of his desire to remain incognito.

To his profession he brought immense perseverance. He was a great reader, and, although not a classical scholar, he was familiar through translations with all the great minds of the antique world, and he remained a student in every sense of the word almost to the day of his death.

As an actor we place him second to none. In Tragedy he combined many of the best characteristics of John Kemble and Edmund Kean. He had much of the dignity, breadth, and intensity of the former as well as the fire and impulsive energy of the latter.

He was endowed with a good figure, standing five feet nine inches when he first appeared in London. His face was generously modelled, and possessed expressive features with a fair-sized grey eye. He had a magnificent natural voice, whose compass embraced every shade of emotion.

It need not be argued whether his Penruddock was equal to John Kemble's, his Sir Giles Overreach to Edmund Kean's, or his Werner to Macready's; but this may unhesitatingly be said, that he played all three characters very finely, a feat which not one of the three actors named could have accomplished.

In Comedy he acted with great success many of the best characters of the elder Farren, such as Lord Ogleby, Sir Peter Teazle, and Nicholas Flam; of Dowton, such as Old Dornton, Job Thornbury, and Dr. Cantwell; of Elliston and Charles Kemble, such as Leon, Don Felix, Mercutio, Lord Townley, and Mr. Oakley; of Liston, Bottom the Weaver; of Wrench, Goldfinch; of Charles Matthews, Young Rapid, Sponge, Jeremiah Bumps, &c.

Even in Comedy, therefore, he played a larger range of characters than any other actor of this century; and, take him all round, a much wider one than Garrick or Henderson in the last.

Many admirers of Macready have stated that Phelps founded his tragic style on his great predecessor; and one paper said that, "while he showed great fire and pathos, he possessed less subtlety than Macready, and never rose to the height of his nobler impulses, or those supreme bursts of emotion with which he could, upon occasion, electrify and excite his audience in an extraordinary degree."

In several of the obituary notices of his career, it was alleged that it was early found out that his great forte in acting lay in Comedy; but it will presently appear how much those writers were in error.

His fame was made during the first seven years of his management of Sadler's Wells Theatre; and during that period, with the exception of Sir John Falstaff, he played only a few Comedy parts, and those only for a few nights; whereas he acted for considerably over one thousand nights all the leading tragic characters familiar to play-goers. These included the principal personations of John Kemble, Edmund Kean, and Macready.

The bill for every evening's performance is in possession of his nephew, so there can be no doubt as to the correctness of the assertion that his first great success was in Tragedy. He was then looked upon by many play-goers as Macready's rival, and, upon the retirement of the latter, as his legitimate successor. This could only have been as a tragic actor, as Macready never appeared in any real Comedy character, with the exception of Benedick, after 1837. No: it was not till after his fame and position had been fairly established that

he began to play the Comedy characters in which he afterwards so eclipsed all who had gone before him.

It may be further stated as a fact that, so far as the public were concerned, much as they might have admired and enjoyed his comic acting, they certainly, by their attendance, showed that they esteemed him most in Tragedy. As a rule, founded on close observation and on statistics, gathered from time to time, they came only in the proportion of three to four when he appeared in Comedy. This refers more especially to Sadler's Wells Theatre and the seven years immediately succeeding, during which he was at Drury Lane.

All that need be said as to Phelps taking Macready as a model in Tragedy is simply this, that Phelps's style and manner were completely formed and publicly recognized and acknowledged before ever he came to London at all. He never saw Macready act from the front of the house but once in his life; and he was too angry at his treatment of him during the first four years he was in London to think anything about him or his acting. He laughed at the idea himself, when questioned upon the point by the present writers, and when asked why he did not publicly deny it, he said it was not worth his while to deny what he thought must be patent to all those who saw much of him.* He added that his style was his own, whether it was good, bad, or indifferent, and that he never saw any of his great predecessors after he was old enough to form any opinion of them. To us, in the great majority of his tragic characters, he was as different to Macready as it was possible to be in the case of two men otherwise so equally matched.

In a few parts, however, such as King John, Werner, and Prospero, and possibly in some others, they were naturally something like each other. But in Shakespeare's four greatest characters, viz. Macbeth, King Lear, Hamlet, and Othello, they were wholly unlike; and, while he played some scenes better than Macready, Macready, again, had the advantage in others; and yet in all these four impersonations surpassing excellence was the characteristic of both.

With reference to the passage already quoted, in which the

* By saying this, however, he did not intend us for one moment to infer that he was speaking disparagingly of Macready's style or powers.

writer, after complimenting Phelps on his great fire and pathos, says that he never rose to the height of Macready's nobler impulses, or those supreme bursts of emotion with which he could, upon occasion, electrify and excite his audience in an extraordinary degree, we have simply to say that, from personal observation of the methods of both during many years of their prime, our judgment tends the other way; and we allege unhesitatingly, that the electrifying bursts of Phelps were decidedly more numerous than those of Macready.

It would be idle to institute a comparison between these two actors and the players of former times; and yet, from a careful perusal and weighing of what has come down to us, we are forced to the conclusion that neither Burbage nor Betterton, Garrick nor Henderson, could, even by a stretch of the imagination, have surpassed Macready or Phelps in the perfect embodiment of those marvellous creations of the great master.

He married very early in life. He was just over twenty-two, while his wife was only sixteen. She was a daughter of a friend of the lady in whose house he was a boarder. The wedding, although it was known they were engaged, took place without the privity of the mother, who was a widow: first, because she might reasonably plead for a little delay, and secondly, on the very characteristic ground that they wished the whole affair to pass off as quietly as possible. Moreover, he was on the eve of his departure for the North to commence his career as an actor.

The marriage was in every way a happy one. Never were a couple more mutually devoted to each other. She anticipated his every wish; and when, in 1867, she finally left him after seven years' intense suffering from a cancer in the breast, of which disease her own mother and only sister died, he was so cast down that his family thought he would never rally again. Indeed he never was the same man afterwards. On the morning after her departure he told his nephew that he had lived through twenty deaths during the previous seven years.

Of the marriage there were six children, three sons and three daughters. The eldest son, William Robert, was a barrister, and was on the Parliamentary staff of the *Times* for a considerable period, and left it, on the recommendation of its chief, to take the prime position on a Manchester paper then

commencing Parliamentary reporting. Some years afterwards he was appointed Chief Justice, and Judge of the Admiralty Court, at St. Helena. This post he held between three and four years, and died three months after his mother.

The second son, Edmund, followed in his father's footsteps, and bade fair to have added fresh lustre to the name; but his career was cut short very suddenly at Edinburgh, where he died (2nd April, 1870), leaving a widow and three children.

The eldest daughter, Eleanor Cooper, survived her father only three and a half years, dying unmarried. The second daughter, Sarah, became the wife of the youngest son of Alderman Goodair of Preston, Lancashire, chief of the firm of John Goodair and Co., extensive cotton-spinners and manufacturers in Preston and Manchester. Of this firm Mr. Phelps's son-in-law is now the head, and the commanding officer of the Preston Volunteers. His wife died in 1874, leaving two sons and a daughter.

Mr. Phelps's youngest son and daughter are still alive. The latter, after the death of her mother, became her father's right hand, waited upon him, and nursed him day and night till his death.

His career may be divided into the following periods. He was about sixteen when he was first smitten with the passion to be a player. For six years he was content with being an amateur; he then spent eleven years as a professional actor in the provinces, and afterwards seven years at the Haymarket, Covent Garden, the Lyceum, the Surrey, Drury Lane, and the provinces. Then came his eighteen or nineteen years at Sadler's Wells, playing, between his own seasons, at the Surrey, the Standard, and Princess's in London, and at Edinburgh, Dublin, Manchester, Liverpool, Glasgow, Newcastle, and Birmingham. Then seven seasons at Drury Lane, and in the provinces during the summer.

After that, for seven or eight years, until within a few months of his death, he acted at the principal provincial theatres just mentioned, and at the Princess's, the Queen's, Astley's, the Gaiety, and the Aquarium in London.

During his management of Sadler's Wells Mr. Buckstone made several overtures to him to appear at the Haymarket during the summer months; but, from one circumstance or another, nothing

came of them. He was either already under engagement, or wanted entire rest.

It need not be said that his great life-work was the management of that theatre, where he produced the whole of Shakespeare's plays, with the exception of Henry VI., Troilus and Cressida, Titus Andronicus, and Richard II. He often talked of doing the last-named as well as the second; but the intention was never carried out. It was the same with some plays of Ford's and others of the Elizabethan poets.

He also talked frequently of acting Dogberry, Autolycus, Caliban, Touchstone, and other Comedy characters; but this idea also fell through.

Of the two thousand and odd new plays sent to him during his career, very few seemed worth much in his eyes. He could never get any one to write a play with Cromwell as the principal character (and he tried many) that at all approached what he considered it should be. His great wish was to personate Oliver Cromwell as the Patriot, the Father, and the Soldier.

In 1846 he purchased from Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton a new five-act play, written on the plan of the old Greek Tragedies, with chorus, entitled *Œdipus*, and with new and original music composed expressly for it by Mercadante. Bulwer wanted him to produce it at Sadler's Wells, but this was impossible. The low prices of admission, even if the house had been full every night of the expected run, could not possibly have covered the cost of the play, the music, and the nightly expenses for the chorus singers; and, as Mr. Phelps rightly said, he could not raise the prices, even for a new play of Bulwer's, above those for which he had produced Shakespeare.

He therefore made up his mind to produce it at the St. James's Theatre during the London season. He accordingly entered into negotiations for that house, and the music had nearly been completed, when he found, to his dismay, that at that period of the year all the chorus singers worth having were under engagement.

What was to be done he knew not, and several rather unpleasant letters passed between him and the author. The latter, however, when Mr. Phelps plainly showed him it would entail a loss on him of from fifteen hundred to two thousand

pounds, if he insisted on holding him to his bargain, very generously gave way and took the play back, leaving him only with such loss as might accrue through the engagement with Signor Mercadante, who ultimately agreed to a friendly compromise.

About 1854 Mr. Phelps renewed his endeavours to get a play of Sir Edward's; but for certain circumstances, unnecessary to be named here, the author at that time declined to renew his connection with the stage by producing anything new.

On going to Drury Lane in 1864, he again made overtures to Sir Edward to produce the *Œdipus* at that theatre; but he declined then himself to risk its production. In a very complimentary letter, however, which will be found at the end of this volume, Sir Edward offered to write him a new play if he could suggest a subject, with plot, &c.; but Mr. Phelps was at this time too preoccupied with other work. Nothing ultimately came of this; but he acted Bulwer's *Richelieu*, *Claude Melnotte*, and *Evelyn* a far greater number of nights than did *Macready*, their original delineator.

During the greater part of his time at Sadler's Wells, he had one of the best working companies a manager could reasonably hope to possess. As *Leaders* when he did not appear himself, and as *Seconds* when he did, he had sometimes together in the same play, and at others singly, George Bennett, who first appeared in London in 1822, and Henry Marston, who made his *début* in 1839. As *First Old Men* he had, at different periods, Anthony Younge, Ray, and Barrett; as *Light Comedians*, Hudson, Hoskins, and Belford; as *les Jeunes Premiers*, G. K. Dickinson, Frederick Robinson, Wybert Rousby, Edmund Phelps, and Hermann Vezin. His *Low Comedians* were, Scharf, H. Nye, Frederick Younge, and Lewis Ball. His *Second Low Comedian* all the time was Charles Fenton; and his *Second Old Man* all the time was Williams. As *Walking Gentlemen* he had John Webster, Morton, Wheatleigh, and Haywell; as *Heavy Fathers*, H. Lacy, H. Mellon, Lunt, and Alfred Rayner. He was fortunate also in having for his *Utility Men*, Graham, T. C. Harris, John Wilkins (author of *Civilization*), Lickfold, Dolman, C. Seyton, Chapman, Knight, and Meagreson. The present Mr. Righton was for some time the *Prompter's Boy*, and during

the latter portion of his time played such parts as the Page to Sir John Falstaff, Prince Henry in King John, &c., &c.

As leading *Tragédiennes* there were in succession, Mrs. Warner, Miss Laura Addison, Miss Glyn (then Mrs. Wills, and afterwards Mrs. Dallas), Miss Goddard, and Miss Atkinson; and in Tragedy and Comedy alike, Mrs. Charles Young, afterwards Mrs. Hermann Vezin.

Miss Cooper and Miss Fitzpatrick were the leading Comic actresses. The First Old Woman was Mrs. Henry Marston, the legitimate successor of Mrs. Glover; and, as Second Old Woman, Mrs. Archbold. Mrs. Ternan, formerly Miss Jarman, of some celebrity years before as a juvenile actress at Drury Lane, was also of the company.

For *Soubrettes* he had Miss Le Batt, Miss Travers, Miss Rafter, and Miss Hudspeth, afterwards Mrs. Edmund Phelps.

Miss Julia St. George was his Ariel in the *Tempest*.

To commence his third season overtures were made to both Mr. Vandenhoff and Mr. Wallack; but as both gentlemen wanted to have their names placed at the top of the bills, nothing came of it. His own was not placed there as an actor, but simply as manager.

Mr. Creswick was then communicated with, and he made no such demand, although it was to be his real *début*. He was engaged till Christmas. After that, an unfortunate misunderstanding having arisen between him and Mr. Greenwood, the acting manager, he seceded from the theatre, but continued on friendly terms with Mr. Phelps for many years afterwards. Indeed, the latter frequently acted at the Surrey Theatre during the period of Mr. Creswick's management.

Mr. Phelps had the principal members of his company twice to dine with him during his management, and on each occasion he had, to meet them, his family medical man, the late Thomas Girtin of Canonbury, a warm lover of the drama, and an intense admirer of Mr. Phelps. Mr. Girtin was the only child of Thomas Girtin, the famous water-colour painter, friend and contemporary of Turner.

His aim as a manager was to conduct his theatre on the highest moral principles both before and behind the curtain; and it may be asserted without hesitation, that he succeeded in

the highest degree. How the educational, the emotional, and the intellectual were happily blended in the performances at Sadler's Wells will be best seen in the various criticisms scattered through this volume.

He was a great pedestrian, and never rode until very late in life. He would frequently start from his house in Canonbury Square, up the Holloway Road and Highgate Hill, to the village of Highgate, thence to the Broad Walk on Hampstead Heath, and back to his residence before dinner, when he had no rehearsals on. His rate of walking was never less than at the rate of five miles an hour. This he did to keep his fat down, he said; for he was inclined to corpulency, like several of the male members of his family. By this means he kept himself pretty nearly all his life between eleven and twelve stone in weight.

He dined at 2.30, especially when acting; and after dinner he took a nap on the couch from 4 to 5, and then a couple of cups of tea and a cigar. All the liquid he took during the evening, when acting, was a little barley water now and then, just to moisten his mouth.

He was never at home to any but the most intimate friends, except by appointment, and it was more than the housemaid's situation was worth to admit a stranger between the hours of 2 and 5 p.m.

He spent a great deal of his spare time fishing and shooting. He was a deft thrower of the fly, and knew nearly every trout stream in England. Nor was he less successful with the gun, and rarely missed being out on the first day of partridge and pheasant shooting for thirty-five years.

He never went out of his own country till the year 1859, when he took his company to Berlin. He was well received by the Germans, and highly spoken of by many of them. The press said he was equal to their own Iffland and Ludwig Devrient, and private individuals said their superior.*

In their criticisms they placed his acting of Shakespeare's four greatest characters in the following order of merit—Lear,

* After his first performance of Lear, several of the critics as well as several German actors almost smothered him with their embraces—they were so delighted with his performance,—W. M. P.

Macbeth, Hamlet, and Othello. At Berlin he was patronized nightly by the King and Queen, and their son and daughter the Crown Prince and Princess,—the latter our own Princess Royal. After having gone from Berlin to Leipzig and Dresden, he acted at Hamburg on his way home.

As a money speculation it was not a failure by any means; neither was it much of a success; for he was then, as at all times, a bad hand at making a bargain. When he agreed to share, which he did at first, the receipts were small; and afterwards, when he was content to receive a certain sum, they rose. This was frequently the case also at home, unless he had some one acting on his behalf in the front of the house.

He never went to America, although frequently on the point of concluding an engagement to do so. He was often assured by Americans that he could go through the States with five of his characters, and make sufficient to have retired on. But his early friend Mrs. Warner's description of her tour in 1851 was the main cause of his never attempting it. Besides, he had an objection to being absent from London so long, and she, knowing his temperament well, declared it would have worried him out of his life. Mr. Frederick Robinson, his later friend, on the other hand, who has been there now some twenty years and more, has said he was sure, had Mr. Phelps gone between the years 1860 and 1870, that both he and his acting would have been so thoroughly appreciated that he would have enjoyed the tour rather than otherwise.

There was a talk of his going to Paris during the first International Exhibition there in 1855. Mr. Mitchell and he were in communication with each other on the subject; but the project fell through chiefly from his disinclination to buckle on his armour.

In 1875 he went for a tour through France, Switzerland, and Italy with his two daughters. He was almost forced into this by Mr. Arthur Cecil and a few other friends, especially by one, who told him he had had his nerves thoroughly braced up by a stay on the Righi. Mr. Phelps spoke very highly of what he saw at Genoa and elsewhere. He enjoyed greatly his stay on the mountain, and came back all the better for it. He had been suffering for some time from intense nervousness prior to leaving home; but

his five or six months' sojourn on the Continent quite set him up.

His popularity was very great, and he never came on the stage without receiving a perfectly spontaneous and prolonged round of applause, and on leaving the theatre there was always a crowd waiting at the stage door to salute him as he entered his carriage. He generally crammed the house whenever he appeared in any London theatre, and this, too, for something like thirty years. He never, moreover, left London for an entire season from his first appearance in 1837 till his death in 1878.

As a manager and producer of plays, he undoubtedly followed in the footsteps of Mr. Macready; but the latter worked in that capacity for only four years in what might be termed his own theatre, whereas Mr. Phelps did so for nearly nineteen.

Mr. Macready restored the great poet's text in many of his productions; but Mr. Phelps went beyond him even in the same plays, and produced others from the original text which Mr. Macready never attempted.

It was, in our opinion, a misfortune that he did not take the Lyceum Theatre as soon as it became vacant after he began at Sadler's Wells. It was and is the *beau idéal* of what a theatre should be in respect of size, and it is generally understood to be of similar dimensions with those of Drury Lane in Garrick's time.

He thought, however, that it had always been an unlucky house, and would not therefore think of it, preferring to stand by Old Sadler's Wells. One thing in favour of the latter was that the rent was not more than a third of the former, and being an excessively nervous man, where money was concerned, he would not venture on so grave a speculation.

The old theatre has always been spoken of by writers in the press as the *Little Theatre*, and certainly it looked small to one seated in the dress circle; but the so-called little theatre held as large an audience as any theatre in London, except Covent Garden and Drury Lane. Between eleven and twelve hundred persons have paid for admission into the gallery, a similar number into the pit, and between five and six hundred to the boxes, dress circle, and private boxes, so that very little short of three thousand persons have been in "the little house" at one time. So much for numbers.

As regards the quality of the frequenters of Sadler's Wells, they were, in the first place, all real play-goers, and came from the north and the south, from the east and from the west. It would consequently be very erroneous to talk of the audiences being for the most part local.

Secondly, as regards the pit and gallery, they were, as a rule, in the latter as respectable as that of any theatre in London. In respect of the former, except on the first nights of pieces, and on Saturdays, when there was generally an overflow of the gallery people into the pit, the *habitués* of that part of the house were of a more intellectual stamp than would be found in most theatres, and were largely composed of the well-educated young City men.

Thirdly, the remainder of the house frequently contained the aristocracy of every grade, except that of birth; and even this last-named class was not without occasional representatives to maintain its reputation for mental vigour, and show its appreciation of intellectual pleasure. These facts were all carefully ascertained at the time by one of the present writers, and may be implicitly relied on.

The stage of the *little house* could, upon occasion, be made as deep as that of Drury Lane, and its width also could be materially increased when required. It will thus be seen its good qualities were not confined to its being low rented.

After Mr. Phelps went to Drury Lane, some critics, and amongst them some of his warmest admirers, said they thought his delivery had become so measured and slow as to mar many of his finest performances, and attributed it, some to one thing, some to another, but none of them hit the mark.

What modicum of truth lay in this criticism we are not prepared to deny, but we account for his more measured elocution in this way. More than one half of the audience in the pit at Sadler's Wells sat under the boxes, and as Mr. Phelps was determined every one, even to the farthest wall, should hear distinctly every word he uttered, he gradually acquired the habit of a slower enunciation than he had used in earlier days.*

* He repeatedly spoke of this to his nephew, and acknowledged what is stated in the text.

He had a great dislike to private dinner-parties, and public banquets he altogether eschewed. The only exceptions to this stay-at-home habit of his were the following. He once accepted an invitation to dine with Lord Chancellor Campbell, and thrice he dined in public: first at the dinner given to Mr. Macready on his retirement from the stage; second, when he took the chair, after having refused to do so for some nine consecutive years, at the General Theatrical Fund Dinner, when the place of meeting was moved from the London Tavern in the City to the Freemason's Tavern in Great Queen Street; and thirdly, when Lord Mayor Cotton gave a dinner to the profession at the Mansion House.*

At Lord Campbell's he met Dr. Archibald Tait, then Bishop of London, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, who told him, as a Prelate of the Church, he took that opportunity of thanking him for all the good he was doing, especially among the masses: more good, in his opinion, he said, than all the clergymen in the North of London put together.

After the dinner at the Hall of Commerce, when he was loudly called for from all parts of the hall to follow Charles Kemble in reply to the toast of the Stage, with which their names were coupled,—he as the representative of the future, the veteran as the representative of the past,—the chairman, Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, had to announce that he had left the room. Two reasons he gave to his nephew for so doing. One was that he considered the night was Mr. Macready's, and he did not think it right to share in any of his honours; and the other was, that he really felt too nervous to do himself justice, so he thought the best thing to do was to make himself *non est*.

The graceful manner in which Mr. Macready, now that all rivalry between them was over, threw, as it were, his mantle upon him, naming him his successor by saying, "that if inquiry were set on foot for one best qualified to undertake the task (the continuation of his work at Drury Lane from December 1841 to June 1843), I should seek him in the theatre which, by seven years' labour, he has from the lowest depths of degradation raised very high in public estimation;" and the

* An account of the General Theatrical Fund Dinner will be found at the end of the volume, as well as his speech at the Mansion House.

immediate greeting which followed from the audience and his brother professionals, James Wallack being the first to lead off in heartiest congratulations, was evidently too much for him, and he modestly withdrew to the sanctity of his own home to ponder these things in his heart and gather fresh courage.

A few nights before this, when Mr. Macready took his farewell of the Stage, and Mr. Phelps played the character of Macduff to his senior's Macbeth, a tremendous call was raised for him at the end of the fourth act, but of which he took no notice, alleging on this occasion, also, that the night was his friend's.

He might have made a handsome income by teaching elocution had he been so inclined, for he was a master of the art; and his pronunciation of the English tongue, perfectly free of all provincialisms, was singularly beautiful and clear. He attached considerable importance to the canine letter, and often said that the rolling of the *r*, when judiciously introduced, gave strength and dignity to the language.* This was first forced upon his attention when playing in the North of Scotland, and it was in Dundee and Aberdeen, especially in the latter, where he first caught up the Scottish accent, and to such perfection that he often afterwards, in such characters as Bailie Nicol Jarvie and Sir Pertinax Macsycophant, deceived even Scottish ears.

To the hundreds of solicitations for lessons he gave a uniform refusal. To this rule, however, there were four exceptions. To one of our now most eminent judges and to the son of another he gave lessons; and in his latter days the brothers Forbes-Robertson enjoyed the privilege of becoming his pupils. With the latter he took no end of pains, going sometimes to the theatre that he might judge for himself how the younger of the two played his part. In all these cases his teaching was a friendly act and not for any emolument.

His universally recognized elocutionary gifts, coupled with his remarkably powerful voice, often led to his being chosen

* The Spanish Consul-General of that day said that he always advised those of his countrymen visiting England, that, although they might not understand one word of the language, they should go and see Mr. Phelps, were it only to hear him pronounce that letter.

to deliver prologues and special addresses on benefit nights and the like. It was he, for instance, who declaimed Isa Craig's prize poem at the Crystal Palace on the centenary of Robert Burns.

When Her Majesty and the late Prince Consort had weekly performances for several seasons at Windsor Castle, he acted there some of his principal characters. When these were under the direction of Mr. Charles Kean, he performed Francesco Agolanti in Leigh Hunt's play of *A Legend of Florence*, Hubert in Shakespeare's *King John*, and *King Henry IV.* in the Second Part of the play so entitled. He himself also produced there with his own company Shakespeare's *King Henry V.* and *Romeo and Juliet*, and Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton's *Richelieu*.

On the Princess Royal's marriage a series of performances in honour of the occasion was given at Her Majesty's Theatre, when Mr. Phelps and his company led off with *Macbeth*, which greatly disconcerted Mr. Charles Kean, and brought on an illness. Some rather injudicious friends of his made a demonstration at the Princess's Theatre on the same evening to try and allay the irritation it had caused him, and certain newspaper correspondence to which the affair gave rise will be found further on.

At the Shakespeare Tercentenary he planted the Oak on Primrose Hill on the 23rd of April, 1864, in memory of the poet, and in the name of the working men of England, who on that occasion were present in their thousands.

Mr. Phelps once acted five nights at a provincial theatre with Edmund Kean, a fact which has been derided by some and variously described by others. His nephew distinctly remembers Mr. Phelps telling his father, who was the tragedian's elder brother, that one night, after *The Iron Chest* was concluded, Kean told his secretary to ask the young man who played Wilford to come to him, and on his appearing the great actor said, "You have played your part well to-night, sir, and if you continue as you have begun, you will one day tread in my shoes."

A rumour got about in the early days of his management that his gallery audiences were very unruly, and that he had been

known to put a cloak over his character dress and go into the front of the house to quell a disturbance. There is no truth whatever in this, and would not be noticed here had not wide publicity been given to the statement in Charles Dickens's *Household Words*.*

During the early part of his career in the provinces, he acted and sang the music of Young Meadows, Henry Bertram, and Francis Osbaldistone. He could sing as high as G. He also had some skill in miniature painting, and when in the country added a little to his salary in this way. He could draw fairly well in crayons, and his wife had in her possession for many years a full-length portrait of himself, six inches in length, taken by himself in the character of Iago just after he had played it to Charles Kean's Othello.†

He could converse on a great variety of subjects, showing a larger acquaintance with the world than could very well be expected from one so absorbed in an exacting profession. To the commercial aspect of things, however, he had but an indifferent eye.

Like every other actor, Mr. Phelps had his mannerisms, which grew upon him with advancing age; but there are mannerisms and mannerisms, and, considering the large number of his tragic characters, he repeated himself less than any leading actor that can be named. The best judges, on the other hand, saw infinite variety in him.

It is absurd to suppose a man can give effect to the same description of character and passion in a different way, because

* I more than once during his life asked him to allow me to deny it; but he always refused, saying, "Let it be, it is not worth being noticed." Now, however, I consider it should not remain any longer uncontradicted.—W. M. P.

I remember his telling me that the first night or two at Sadler's Wells he was obliged to have an extra body of police from head-quarters, and that these men did their duty so vigorously, that he was never afterwards troubled. I have repeatedly seen doubtful characters of both sexes turned back and refused admission to higher-priced parts of the house than the gallery.—J. F. R.

† What has become of it I know not; but having had it in my hands many times, I can vouch for its admirable execution, as well as its striking resemblance.—W. M. P.

it is in a different piece. A great actor *must* be the same every now and then, or else, as Hazlitt said of Edmund Kean's critics, they would look for this difference so often, that they would expect him, at last, to play the part standing on his head, or something very much like it. It is rather too much to expect any man to be a chameleon in colour and a Proteus in form.

Shortly after Macready's retirement in 1851, he made up his mind, his star being then in the ascendant, to take Drury Lane and see if he could continue his labours there, as they had been carried on at Sadler's Wells, making it an all-round People's Theatre. He left London fully persuaded that he should hear in a day or two from Mr. Greenwood that he had signed and sealed on their joint behalf, as lessees, when, to his dismay, he was informed that, consequent on his partner's not having deposited a cheque for £500 with the secretary, as was the custom in those days, Mr. E. T. Smith had stepped over their heads and secured the theatre.

This was a great disappointment to Mr. Phelps and his friends, as the latter were persuaded he would have made it not only a histrionic, but a financial success. His then partner, Thomas Longden Greenwood, a man of the highest integrity and honour, worked as diligently for the good of Sadler's Wells in his capacity of business manager as Mr. Phelps did as the stage manager. The knowledge the former had acquired in seven years as to stage requirements, and where best to obtain all the many things relating to theatrical and scenic effect at the smallest cost, was very remarkable, and in a large establishment like Drury Lane such knowledge would have been invaluable.

Much has been said as to the so-called non-financial success of Sadler's Wells; but it had enabled him to live like a gentleman for nineteen years, to be able in all his sporting and other excursions to stay at good hotels,—he had the best rooms at the Lion at Farningham always kept at his disposal,—and, above all, to bring up a family of three sons and three daughters, and give them all a first-class education, the two eldest boys spending the last three years of their student life at Dresden, and the youngest at the college at Worthing. Besides all this, he was able to pay off, about the middle of his Sadler's Wells career, serious amounts for which he had become security for

four friends—two pairs of brothers—not long after he came to London, and who were unable ever to repay him. For renewing the bills from time to time he had to pay usurious interest. Moreover, he lost nearly £3000 in commercial speculations.* His co-lessee lived in very good style for sixteen years, and retired with sufficient to live on. This, unfortunately, he foolishly threw away for the most part by taking Astley's Amphitheatre. The result, then, of the Sadler's Wells management, though not exactly fortune, was far from being unsatisfactory, and still further from being anything like failure.

The excellence of his company, which has already been touched upon, was not, of course, equal in individual talent to Mr. Macready's at either of the Patent Theatres; but it may be very much doubted whether any play in its entirety gave greater satisfaction in the larger houses than it did at Sadler's Wells; for, be it remembered, it was as a whole, as John A. Heraud once wrote in *Tallis's Magazine*, "the result of this one actor's brain."

With the exception of Mr. George Bennett and Mr. Henry Marston,—and with these he seldom or never interfered, and certainly not in their conception of characters,—every other member of his company received the benefit of his assistance in all they spoke and did. Now this would not have been brooked by the majority of Mr. Macready's company, and as some of them were frequently thrust into parts they thought beneath them, no small amount of slurring was the consequence.

Charles Kean's company at the Princess's, consisting after himself of Walter Lacy, Ryder, Belton, &c., could not in our opinion compare with that of Mr. Phelps in Tragedy; and that of the Haymarket, though very good for certain modern pieces, could not touch his in the acting of one of the old comedies.

It may not be amiss now to glance, if only cursorily, at a few of those who were his contemporaries; for, with the exception of Mr. Macready, the greatest of them all, others have hitherto been only casually named.

VANDENHOFF, although certainly a fine actor, was not equal

* I am bound to admit he entered upon one of these speculations at my suggestion; but many of the chief commercial men of the day were equally deceived.—W. M. P.

to Mr. Phelps even in the characters in which he unquestionably shone. He was certainly very circumscribed in his range, and he could not act Comedy at all.

CHARLES KEAN.—Many of those who came in contact with him forty or fifty years ago have repeatedly asserted that Charles Kean thought himself equal, if not superior, as an actor, to his illustrious father. In the eyes of impartial people, he scarcely possessed the physical attributes for performing leading characters, and to compare him with either Macready or Phelps betrays, in our opinion, a bias not based on knowledge. His Sir Walter Amyott, in *The Wife's Secret*, and Mr. Ford in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, were, perhaps, his two best characters. With regard to his Louis XI., of which so much has been said, and by many considered his best impersonation, it is well known he went over to Paris to see the actor who created the part, in the same way as he used to come to Sadler's Wells to see all Mr. Phelps's productions during the first ten or twelve years of his management. On his first night Kean intended the part to be intensely tragic in every scene; but the more he tried to do this the more he travestied the character; and from that night, finding it went so well with the audience, he really did, of his own free will, try to give to it a grotesque complexion. George Daniel, the well-known dramatic critic, was of opinion that Mr. Kean travestied every tragic character he ever attempted. Yet we are free to acknowledge that Kean, in his best moments, was not without a certain lifting power.

Mr. Phelps threw Mr. Kean completely into the shade by his performance of Macduff at the Haymarket Theatre in 1841, and he could never be induced to alternate Othello and Iago with him in London, having had sufficient taste of Mr. Phelps's quality in those characters in the North of England and in Scotland.

WARDE was a very good tragic actor in his time, but very limited in range. He was generally content to play second characters to Phelps. He died in 1840.

ELTON, who preceded Phelps in London, was also a sterling actor, never demurred to play inferior characters to him, and accepted an engagement to play Castaldo, a *jeune premier's* part, to his Martinuzzi at the Lyceum for six weeks in 1841, at a salary of £15 per week.

GEORGE BENNETT (lastly from Bath), who had been in London fifteen years before Phelps, although only four years older, acted many leading characters while Mr. Phelps was not much more than a utility man in the provinces. When both were in London, however, Bennett was willing to occupy a similar position in reference to Phelps as Elton had done, and ultimately, for some ten years, became one of his two right-hand men at Sadler's Wells, and was great in such characters as Caliban, Benjamin Stout, Sir Toby Belch, Douglas, Bessus, Joseph Surface, Hubert, Henry VIII., Stukely, Apemantus, Enobarbus, and Pistol. The first-named was an unrivalled piece of characterization. He lived two years longer than his manager.

ANDERSON, who first appeared in London about five weeks after Phelps, was for some years the most powerful actor of juvenile tragic parts of his time, and could have remained so for many years longer; but, like Charles Kemble, he would be something more, and failed. In 1849 he opened Drury Lane Theatre, engaging Vandenhoff and John Cooper, and it was currently reported that he said he would soon shut up Sadler's Wells. The entertainment on his opening night consisted of *The Merchant of Venice* and a pantomime, and lasted from seven o'clock till midnight. Henry Marston, who accompanied one of the writers on that occasion, remarked, on coming out, that, however meritorious the performance might be, he did not think Sadler's Wells would be brought to a standstill just yet. The Drury Lane management lasted with disastrous consequences to Mr. Anderson till 1851, but Sadler's Wells continued under Mr. Phelps for thirteen years afterwards. Mr. Anderson afterwards appeared at Drury Lane in 1865 with Mr. Phelps, playing Faulconbridge to his King John, Charles Surface to his Sir Peter Teazle, Iachimo to his Leonatus Posthumus, Marc Antony to his Brutus, and one night, for Chatterton's benefit, Othello to his Iago.

HENRY MARSTON succeeded Mr. Phelps as leading actor at the Exeter Theatre under Hay's management in 1837-8, and first appeared early in 1839 at Drury Lane, under W. J. Hammond's management as Benedick, Mrs. Stirling playing Beatrice. He afterwards stood in the same relation to Mr. Phelps as Mr. Bennett. Unlike his manager, however, he was a thorough

follower of the Kemble school, and, in the opinion of many good judges, he was the legitimate successor of Charles Kemble, playing with great success in his prime all his characters both in Tragedy and Comedy. Among these were Macduff, Edgar, Doricourt, Faulconbridge, Benedick, Iachimo, Jaffier, &c.; and had he not had something the matter with the roof of his mouth all his life, which considerably affected his voice, he would have done more justice to Hamlet, Romeo, and other leading characters than Charles Kemble did. He acted Iago to his chief's Othello oftener than all the other Iagos put together, and finely he played it. He told his nephew that he dreaded the approach of the Othello night, for Mr. Phelps was always so terribly in earnest, that he thrust him about like a shuttlecock, and made his right arm and wrist ache for days after.

CRESWICK made his *début* as a leading actor in London at Sadler's Wells in 1846 in the character of Hotspur, followed by Romeo, both of which he acted with success. He remained with Mr. Phelps some six or seven months, and afterwards played at the Princess's and the Haymarket, and then became joint lessee with Mr. Shepherd of the Surrey Theatre, where he remained several years. He was with Mr. Phelps at both Drury Lane and the Princess's under Chatterton's management, and played Macduff to his former manager's Macbeth for four nights a week, and Macbeth the other two, Helen Faucit being Lady Macbeth. He played also Hotspur to his Sir John Falstaff, Iago to his Othello, Iachimo to his Leonatus, Cassius to his Brutus, and Joseph Surface to his Sir Peter Teazle, &c. He had a good voice and presence, and was for many years a popular all-round actor.

G. V. BROOKE, originally of Dublin, made his first appearance in London at the Old Olympic in 1847-8; but he ought to have appeared four or five years earlier. In 1842-3 Mr. Macready sent his agent to Aberdeen to see him play,—the Theatre Royal of that city being then under the management of Mr. Langley,—and so satisfied was that gentleman with his performance, that he engaged him there and then. G. V. Brooke shortly after started for the metropolis; but in the meantime he had been smitten by a lady of Babylonian beauty,

sojourning in the Granite City, and she, holding him fast in her toils, arrested his southward progress at Dundee. One of the most promising careers was thus blasted. Never did young actor enter on the stage more richly dowered, and never did young actor throw his gifts more wildly to the wind. While under the witchery of this Circe he entered upon a series of intermittent orgies, which lasted for several years; and when he finally burst through her spells and appeared in London, his glorious voice, with all its marvellous sweetness, flexibility, and power, was gone, and he spoke in the cracked and husky accents of a Bacchanal. And yet, in spite of this melancholy and pitiful declension, Gustavus Brooke made way in the Metropolis. But the people of London, the States, and Australia never saw him at his best.

Swinging with one arm carelessly on the cabin door of the sinking steamer whereon he unflinchingly fulfilled his destiny, waving his adieus with the other to the laden boat which he heroically refused to enter, and bidding its rescued occupants, in cheery voice, give his kind regards and remembrances to his friends in Australia, his death was altogether enviable and beautiful exceedingly.

BARRY SULLIVAN, born at Birmingham in 1824, had achieved a considerable reputation in Liverpool, Manchester, and Scotland before he appeared in London at the Haymarket in 1851 as Hamlet. He had acted Faulconbridge to Mr. Phelps's King John and Mrs. Warner's Constance in Liverpool, as well as Cassius or Marc Antony the previous year, and Phelps, on returning to town, spoke well of him.

On Barry Sullivan's return from Australia in 1866, he took the position that Anderson had held the previous year, and played Faulconbridge and Charles Surface with fine effect. His style belonged to the Charles Kemble school. He had undoubted power, but in such characters as Macbeth and Richard lacked fire and intensity.

CHARLES DILLON was first known to one of the present writers in the Island of Jersey in 1838, where he was playing the lead at the age of twenty-five, under the management of Mr. Pyott Green. The entertainment at this theatre consisted generally of melodrama, but Hamlet and Othello were both acted at

intervals, and in these characters Dillon showed greater promise than he ever fulfilled.

After going the round of the provinces, he became manager of the Sheffield Theatre for some time, and came to London in 1856-7, playing Belphegor—by far his finest character—at Sadler's Wells between Mr. Phelps's seasons, with great success, and afterwards at the Lyceum, of which he became the lessee. He wanted Mr. Phelps to act there in the summer; but, though the terms were liberal, he declined work during the hot weather.

After Creswick, Anderson, and Barry Sullivan had been successively engaged, Mr. Phelps tried Dillon at Drury Lane for a while by way of a change; but the change was for the worse, and his attempt to play Falstaff and Hotspur on alternate nights with Mr. Phelps was simply ludicrous; yet two good judges of acting are said to have thought highly of his Othello. He afterwards appeared as Leontes in *A Winter's Tale* during the autumn of Chatterton's last season, but it was a miserable failure.

HERMANN VEZIN.—This accomplished actor was *jeune premier* at Sadler's Wells in 1860, and played with recognized success Orlando in *As You Like It*, Sir Thomas Clifford in *The Hunchback*, and Peregrine in Coleman's *John Bull*, a character originally played by George Frederick Cooke. Mr. Vezin's elocution was scholarly and finished, and he is one of the very few English actors who understand and practise that most essential accomplishment in a player—the beautiful art of fence.

ROBSON was well known at the Grecian before he went to Dublin, prior to his appearing at the Strand in the burlesque of Shylock. He showed best in domestic drama, and Mr. Phelps went to see him in the *Porter's Knot*, or in *Daddy Hardacre*, and was so pleased with his acting that he wrote him a letter of congratulation the next day. He went again to see him in another character; but it was, in his view, simply a repetition of the same thing, although, to his mind, it ought to have been very different. This showed how circumscribed Robson's powers of conception were. When he attempted Bottom the Weaver at the Grecian, he failed to body forth his idiosyncrasy. Robson himself was well aware of the limit

of his range, and very wisely refused to be cajoled into trying to act the Shakespearean Shylock.

FECHTER.—This gentleman, on the second of Mr. Phelps's vacations at Sadler's Wells, during which he appeared at the Princess's, after Charles Kean had given it up, alternated his Hamlet with Mr. Phelps's King Lear. The former, it must frankly be confessed, drew the larger houses, so far as receipts were concerned. Hamlet filled the boxes, but King Lear crammed the gallery and pit. At the same time, it must be remembered Fechter's nights were the off-nights of the Opera, whereas, when Phelps played, Covent Garden was open.

His agreement with Mr. Harris being only verbal, Mr. Phelps did not wish to appear, telling him he was sure two excitements in the same theatre, especially in the summer season, could hardly be got up, much less maintained; and that, if Mr. Harris wished to keep him to his agreement, he certainly would not share, as he had done the previous year, but would draw a stated salary, and to this the manager agreed. However, just as King Lear was beginning to draw the box people in larger numbers, and the Hamlet to flag in securing their attendance, Mr. Phelps had made up his mind to take rest. Few people knew these facts.

We are inclined to agree with the French critics in their estimate of Fechter, and consider that he was more a melodramatic than a tragic actor. His Hamlet was fresh, the business new, and, to a certain extent, was regarded as a success; but his Othello was altogether a failure. His most finished performance was Ruy Blas; but even here he failed to rise to the full height in the last act.

Having thus run rapidly through the male performers of Mr. Phelps's time, we propose to take an equally cursory glance at the ladies.

MARY AMELIA HUDDART, afterwards Mrs. Warner, was the *beau idéal* of a tragic performer, especially in severe and majestic characters, and greater, perhaps, in them than any other actress of our time. In our opinion, she was the legitimate successor of Mrs. Siddons. She played Portia to Mr. Phelps's Shylock on his first appearance in London, and was, as will hereafter be

stated, with him as joint manager of Sadler's Wells from Whit Monday 1844 to 1846.

HELEN FAUCIT, now Lady Martin, was generally and justly considered the most poetical delineator of tragic characters of her day, and her elocution was certainly unmatched. She played with great success all Shakespeare's juvenile characters, and was the original representative of the heroines of Lord Lytton and Dr. Westland Marston. In Marie de Meranie of the last-named she was perfection itself. Her popularity, moreover, in provincial theatres, and especially in Scotland, was immense.

ELLEN TREE, afterwards Mrs. Charles Kean, was both accomplished and popular, and at different periods of her career essayed all the characters played both by Mrs. Warner and Miss Helen Faucit; but she lacked the splendid presence and physique of the former, and the sylph-like grace and poetry of the latter.

MRS. STIRLING, whom we still have happily among us, and who still retains her power to charm, has a grateful remembrance of the kindness Mr. Phelps showed in helping her to master the difficulties of Scottish pronunciation, when she played Lady Rodolpha Lumbercourt many years ago at the Haymarket. She also, among her other personations, played Sophia in *The Road to Ruin*; and Mr. Phelps always spoke of her acting in terms of the highest appreciation.

LAURA ADDISON, who made her London *début* at Sadler's Wells in 1846, had a great deal of natural ability, which she had a thorough opportunity of exhibiting during the two years she was under Mr. Phelps's management. In several parts, indeed, both original and Shakespearean, she greatly distinguished herself. Nothing could be finer than her Margaret Randolph in *Feudal Times*, and Lilian Savile in *John Savile of Haysted*, Viola in *Twelfth Night*, Lady Mabel in *The Patrician's Daughter*, Julia in *The Hunchback*, and Isabella in *Measure for Measure*.

ISABELLA GLYN (Mrs. Wills, afterwards Mrs. Dallas) made a decided mark during the three years—viz. from 1848 to 1851—she was with Mr. Phelps. Her Beatrice in *Much Ado about Nothing* was a remarkably fine performance, and her Cleopatra in *Antony and Cleopatra* was simply magnificent. In these parts her acting was equal to Mrs. Warner's; but, apparently from a lack of feeling and sympathy with the part personated,

she was inferior to Mrs. Warner in every character specially pertaining to her that she essayed.

FANNY COOPER, who was several years with Mr. Phelps as an actress of high Comedy, and the more delicate of juvenile Tragedy parts, was a lady of great ability and a decided favourite. Her Lady Teazle, Lady Townley, Mrs. Ford, Rosalind, Virginia, Julie de Mortemar, were all fine performances, and her Sophia in *The Road to Ruin* in 1846 was equal to Mrs. Stirling's in 1840, which is awarding her the highest praise that can be given.

HELEN FITZPATRICK came from Dublin, and made her first appearance at Sadler's Wells in 1849, as Letitia Hardy in *The Belle's Stratagem*, followed by Constance in *The Love Chase*, Lady Gay Spanker in *London Assurance*, and other characters previously associated with Mrs. Nisbett, whose legitimate successor she eventually proved herself in the eyes of all capable of forming a judgment. She possessed all her fine animal spirits, if she did not quite convey to the audience the contagion of Mrs. Nisbett's ringing and unrivalled laugh.

MRS. CHARLES YOUNG, afterwards Mrs. Hermann Vezin, also made her first bow to a London audience at Sadler's Wells, and in the autumn of 1857. She played not only high Comedy parts very finely, but such characters as Julia in *The Hunchback*, with which part she opened with great success. Some people thought, indeed, that as Helen in *The Hunchback* she quite divided the honours with Miss Faucit when they played together at Drury Lane, where she remained off and on for five seasons commencing in 1864. Her *Rosalind* was decidedly good, and her Fanny in *The Hypocrite* was a most admirable piece of Comedy.

RACHEL and RISTORI, the two greatest foreign actresses of his time, Phelps never saw, consequently could form no idea of the strangely attenuated and weird-like personality of the former, which at times she could endow with an intensity of passion which made the beholder shiver to his very marrow. If Rachel could thus give to human hate almost a fiendish compression, Ristori was scarcely less successful in moving her audiences by the display of a breadth and power quite unrivalled. She had her subtle touches of surprise, too, in Comedy as in Tragedy, and the womanly proportions of a

splendid figure imparted dignity and grace to everything she did. But all this Mr. Phelps had to take on hearsay.

In illustration of the non-commercial side of Phelps's character, the following circumstance may be here cited. About 1849 Mr. Tallis, the publisher, conceived the idea of bringing out Phelps's edition of the acting drama. Each of the plays in which he had appeared was to have an engraving of himself in character, and those pieces in which he did not play, a portrait of Mr. Bennett, Mr. Marston, or the leading Lady.

The publication, in short, was to have been copies of his prompt-books, and he had actually stood for the characters of Macbeth and Hamlet, when his nephew asked him what he was to have for the copyright. "You are not going to give away the result of years of labour for nothing?" "I never thought of that," he answered, and seemed quite struck with the question; "I must speak to Tallis." Mr. Phelps did speak to Tallis, and named what he considered a fair sum. On Mr. Tallis demurring to the amount, it so annoyed Mr. Phelps that he at once said, "You shall not have it now at any price;" but the interview ultimately resulted in the publication of Tallis's Shakespeare and Magazine. The first play issued was Macbeth with his portrait. It was generally understood that 40,000 copies were sold, and a second edition of 30,000.

Some time after this, Willoughby's edition of Shakespeare was proposed, if he would undertake the editing. His time, however, was too much occupied otherwise. It was then suggested that E. L. Blanchard should do the notes, submitting them to him for supervision. This was, in a measure, a mere matter of form; but, as the book was sent out to the world under his name, he felt bound, he said, to look over the annotations. At the same time, it must be confessed that whatever merit attached to the work belonged, without doubt, to the sub-editor already named.

Of the thousands of letters he received during his career, only a few hundreds have been preserved, and from these have been selected a few from such men as Macready, Charles Dickens, John Forster, Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, Rev. James White, G. H. Boker, and others.

A number of play-bills, also, are inserted, extending over a period of fifty years, which may serve as reference, at some future time, to those who may wish to know how plays were cast from 1814 to 1868.

The plays produced by Mr. Macready during his four years of management, and those produced by Mr. Phelps during the first four seasons he had Sadler's Wells, with the number of nights they were each played at Covent Garden and Drury Lane, and at Sadler's Wells, will also be found at the end of the work. To those curious in such matters the comparison will be interesting.

During forty years of intimate relationship and constant observation, his nephew sums up his character in this way, that, although he was studious, thoughtful, and generally bringing to bear on all he did great judgment, he was one of the most impulsive of men; but impulsive on the right side, if it was to do any person a service. Self-interest was the last thing that presented itself to his mind.

This impulsiveness was frequently made strongly manifest in his acting. He would produce effects one night that he would altogether miss another. In the same character he would be one night, all fire and animation, and so tame, comparatively, on another, that he would seem to have "no spur to prick the sides of his intent." This will account for certain criticisms that sometimes appeared. He never cared, however, generally speaking, to act any character more than twenty nights in succession, that freshness and spontaneity, as far as possible, might be ever present.

Into his acting generally he threw immense energy. He could be intense, fiery, vigorous, rough, refined, ineffably mean, or magnificently grand, as occasion required. Like Edmund Kean, by certain intonations of the voice and movements of the figure, he could make himself appear much taller and bigger than he really was. Lofty pride he exhibited with great largeness of action: witness his Cardinal Wolsey and Coriolanus. As Louis XI., on the other hand, he dwindled into a manikin. All kingly and soldierly qualities he could manifest in his matchless bearing, as his Henry V., Melantius, and Macbeth bear ample testimony; and, above all, he threw into

such characters a pathos which was unapproachably manly and grand. It went straight home to the heart of every one of his auditors, who felt that in him they had the surcharged soul and the electric outcome of an artist and a master.

The late John Oxenford, in one of his criticisms, said that those who had seen his Bottom the Weaver, Parolles, Don Adriano de Armado, Falstaff, Shallow, and Sir Pertinax Macsycophant would not easily forget him. But no less memorable, in our opinion, were his murder and banquet scenes in Macbeth; the close of the first and second acts, and entire fifth act of his King Lear; the close of the second and entire third act of his Hamlet; the third and fifth acts of his Othello; the third act of his Shylock; the last act of his Sir Giles Overreach; the last act of his Stranger; and, above all, the last act of his Lucius Junius Brutus, and the last act of his Wolsey. Whoever, possessed of the necessary sympathy and dramatic instinct, beheld any of these must carry with them the impressions distinct and clear till they and their possessors are effaced by death.

We are well aware that there are those who will not altogether agree with this estimate of his powers. Some have denied that he was a great actor, or at least not great in Tragedy; others have stated that he was only a famous declaimer and elocutionist. Some have accused him of lacking imagination; others of being, in his tragic performances, deficient in variety. In respect of his comic characters, there were those who denied them the quality of unctuousness, and others the command of facial expression, and some said that he was only a fairly good comic actor, and there were not wanting those who alleged that he could not personate the heroic.

Mr. Phelps was not "hail fellow well met" at clubs and smoking parties, nor was he to be seen at the dinner-table of my lord, or at the receptions of my lady, who affected Bohemia and the dwellers therein; and, above all, he never courted quasi-literary cliques, or, in any way, pandered to the press; consequently, its more ignoble members and perky little whippers, when he played at Drury Lane in 1865, penned words of disparagement, when they dared, and called it independent criticism.

But the ablest literary judges, who make a specialty of the drama, have agreed with us, as the various criticisms in the different parts of this book will prove, and with them the great majority of play-goers who are old enough to remember him in his prime, that Phelps, for versatility and comprehensiveness, was the Garrick and the Henderson of the nineteenth century rolled into one, the rival of Macready, and, after his retirement, beyond all comparison, the greatest as well as the most perfect and finished actor of his time.

In the history of the Stage no other leading man can be named who played with equal success such opposite characters as Macbeth, Sir Peter Teazle, Bottom the Weaver, and Sponge; Coriolanus, Mercutio, Falstaff, and Jeremy Didler; Hamlet, Lord Ogleby, Christopher Sly, and Young Rapid; Othello, Dr. Cantwell, Don Adriano de Armado, and Hotspur; King Lear, Jeremiah Bumps, Malvolio, and Don Felix; Brutus, Nicholas Flam, Shylock, and Rover; Wolsey, and Job Thornbury; and, in the same play, King Henry IV. and Justice Shallow; King James I. and Trapbois the Miser.

FROM HIS BIRTH TO THE OPENING OF SADLER'S WELLS.

1804—1837.

SAMUEL PHELPS was born on the 13th of February, 1804, at No. 1, St. Aubyn Street, in the Parish of Stoke Damerell, in the Borough of Devonport (then Plymouth Dock), in the County of Devon.

He was the seventh child and second son of Robert M. and Ann Phelps.

His father, at the time of his birth, kept the principal warehouse in the three towns of Plymouth, Devonport, and Stonehouse for supplying naval officers with their outfits, and was on terms of intimacy with Sir Sidney Smith and other commanders of distinction in the Navy of that period. His social position was such that he had His Majesty's commission conferred on him as second in command of the Plymouth Division of the South Devon Volunteer Artillery, organized just then for the defence of our shores against the threatened invasion of the First Napoleon.

His paternal grandfather was Abraham Phelps, of Pilton Great House, Pilton, near Shepton Mallet, Somersetshire (who was a descendant of a couple from Scotland, who settled in Somerset about James I.'s time), a glove and stocking manufacturer on an extensive scale, and who, at a county election, rode in at the head of one hundred voters who had accepted him as their political leader.

His paternal uncle, Edmund, was the second husband of Catherine Anne, Countess of Antrim (in her own right), and step-father of Frances Anne Vane Tempest, afterwards *the* Marchioness of Londonderry, who did so much for the coal-

miners on her estates in the North of England. This uncle was for some time Secretary of Legation with Lord Burghersh, afterwards Earl of Westmoreland, at the Court of Turin, and Lieutenant of the Yeomen of the Guard in the reign of George the Fourth. He was for many years on terms of great intimacy and friendship with the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel, as well as the before-mentioned Earl of Westmoreland, to whom he rendered active assistance in founding the Royal Academy of Music.

The maternal grandfather of Mr. Phelps held His Majesty's commission, and his sole maternal uncle was Charles Turner, Captain in the Royal Navy.

The future player received his education for the most part in his native town, finishing it at the classical school at Saltash, conducted by Dr. Samuel Reece.

He was a well-grown, powerful boy, and an accomplished swimmer. He was left an orphan at the age of sixteen years, and was then taken to the home of his eldest brother,* who was a wine and spirit merchant. He put him nine months afterwards with the printers and publishers of the principal Plymouth newspaper, as a junior reader, with whom he stayed in that capacity for three months. At this time he would frequently get out of his brother's house by stealth late in the evening, to act as an amateur in the after-pieces at the Devonport Theatre.

His sisters, had they known it, would, no doubt, have raised objections to his having anything to do with the theatre; but not so his brother. He had resided in London in 1813-14, and again in 1818-19, and had seen Mrs. Siddons and John Kemble, Charles Young, Charles Kemble, Edmund Kean, and Macready, having been, during his sojourn in the metropolis, a constant visitor to Covent Garden and Drury Lane with his cousin, Doctor Hyde, who was the dramatic critic of one of the morning papers.

When Samuel had reached his seventeenth birthday, he suddenly made up his mind to come to London to see what the metropolis would offer to an aspiring youth, having evidently then, as he acknowledged afterwards to his nephew, a

* His eldest brother was my father.—W. M. P.

strong predilection for the stage. He was, however, more particularly prompted to this step by that nephew's maternal grandfather, who told him it was a shame that he allowed himself to be an incubus on one who had quite enough to do to look after himself and a young wife without having a brother to provide for as well.

He said nothing to his brother of this conversation, well knowing how he would have resented such an interference on the part of his father-in-law. Samuel's mind, however, was made up. He left his brother's house without a single word of leave-taking, and, with only fourteen shillings and sixpence in his pocket, started on his journey for London. He called on his way, at Bristol, on his uncle Isaac, his father's youngest brother, one of the principal merchants in that port,* from whom he received some assistance, and again turned his face towards London. His brother heard nothing of him again, after his first arrival, for nearly sixteen years.

On reaching London he underwent, at first, some few privations, but in a short time he succeeded in getting a trial on the *Globe* newspaper as a temporary junior reader, and got on so well that he soon obtained a permanent appointment as such. In course of time he rose from being a junior to a senior, and acted in this capacity on the *Globe*, and afterwards on the *Sun*, for a space of five years, being at the time he gave up this work head reader on one or the other of these two evening newspapers.† He was also occasionally a contributor to both.

Whilst in these capacities he made the acquaintance of the late Douglas Jerrold and W. E. Love (polyphonist), who were both with him on these journals, and they were all three for nearly the whole of the five years the principal members of an amateur theatrical company who gave from one to three performances a week at a small private theatre in Rawstone Street, Islington.

He had in the meantime fallen in love, and, when he had just completed his twenty-second year, he was asked by a member

* His wife was an aunt of the late J. A. Roebuck.

† He occasionally worked in *other* establishments in other capacities than that of a reader.—W. M. P.

of the Olympic Theatre, who had seen and thought well of his acting, to perform for him on his benefit night. He assented, and was announced as a gentleman amateur. The characters he performed that night were Eustache de St. Pierre in *The Surrender of Calais*, and the Count de Valmont in *The Foundling of the Forest*. His success was so great that he made up his mind at once to throw up journalism and make the stage his profession.*

As a preliminary to his commencing systematically on the stage the arduous labour of trying to become famous, he married.

The young lady was only sixteen years of age, and her name was Sarah Cooper. They were married at St. George's Church, Queen's Square, 11th August, 1826, and in the autumn of the same year he accepted an engagement to act in the York circuit at eighteen shillings per week. This was rather a bold beginning, seeing he had no private means; for, although he had been earning on the papers latterly as much as three and four pounds a week, he had not saved anything. Fortunately for him, his wife had an aunt and uncle in fairly comfortable circumstances at York, who befriended them on many occasions, when they would otherwise have fared badly. This he never forgot; for, in later years, he showed his affectionate regard for the old lady, when a widow, by administering out of his plenty to her then comparative poverty. He continued more or less in the York circuit and other Yorkshire towns for three years, and in June 1828 his eldest son was born. He was not actually acting in York at that time, but some thirty miles off, at Leeds; but his wife, fortunately for him as well as herself, was with her relations, otherwise her wants would have been but scantily supplied; for, although he was no longer earning so little as eighteen shillings a week, still his salary had not been increased very materially. His nephew well remembers his uncle telling him how early on Sunday mornings he used to start to walk from where he was to York, that he might spend the middle of the day with her, and then leave so as to arrive in time for his rehearsals on Monday morning.

There was no coach between the two places on Sundays,

* See Appendix.

and, if there had been, he had not the means to pay for riding. He once, also in Yorkshire, had to walk to an engagement many miles for want of funds, and the only help he got then was to hang on behind some way to the stage-coach for a few miles to enable him to arrive in good time; but he was very tired and footsore when he got to his destination. Those two things, and once walking in St. James's Park in 1821 counting the railings, as he figuratively said, for his dinner, are the only special trials that he went through when a young man. He still continued in the North of England, pushing his way and gaining ground in his profession. In the autumn of 1830 we find him at the Sheffield Theatre under the management of the Butlers, dividing the leading business with Samuel Butler. He made three great hits there, viz. Norval, King John, and Goldfinch in *The Road to Ruin*. The latter's line of "I'm a gentleman, that's your sort," became so popular, that it was in everybody's mouth all over the town through the winter months that followed.

Early in 1832 he was engaged by Mr. Watkin Burroughs as leading actor for the Belfast, Preston, and Dundee theatres, and then by Mr. Ryder for the Aberdeen, Perth, and Inverness circuit. He remained connected with those circuits in the same position for four years, and his fame as a provincial Shakespearean actor of the first rank extended far and wide. He not only played leading tragic characters, but comic as well as tragic, old men of all descriptions, and eccentric Comedy, and was as successful in one line as the other. So much was this the case that Mr. Burroughs, himself no mean judge, was puzzled, he said, as to what to advise him to do first, when the time should arrive for him to make his *début* in the metropolis. At Belfast he more than once gave lectures on elocution.

At Inverness and Aberdeen he played the Dougal Creature to Mr. Ryder's famous Rob Roy, and Sir Archy Macsarcasm in *Love à la Mode* with great success. It was during his four years' connection with the above-mentioned theatres that he acquired that mastery of the Scottish dialect which he used afterwards with such effect in several other Scotch characters, to the great delight of his patrons in the North, many of whom would have it that he was a born Scotchman. Whilst in the capital of the

Highlands he made the acquaintance and friendship of Robert Carruthers, author of a *Life of Pope*, and proprietor and editor of the *Inverness Courier*, and this friendship continued till his death.

He now made up his mind to come south, and in the summer of 1836 we find him starring at the Worthing Theatre, where he drew large audiences, and first laid the foundation of his London popularity; for it was there many families from town first saw him, and delightedly renewed their acquaintance when he afterwards came to the metropolis. In Worthing he made a great hit in Mr. Samuel Coddle, a great part of the elder Farren's. Whilst there, Mr. Hay, the then manager of the Exeter and Plymouth theatres, heard of him, and at once secured his services for the winter season for the former theatre, where he appeared in October, and with great success.

The first time his nephew heard of him professionally was by two paragraphs which appeared in the Plymouth newspapers. The *Journal* on a Thursday said, "A new actor by the name of PHELPS has made his appearance at the Exeter Theatre with great success. The Exeter critics speak of him as rivalling Kean, who was first raised from obscurity on the same boards." The Saturday following the *Herald* said, "We understand that MR. PHELPS, the tragedian, who has created such an immense sensation at the Exeter Theatre by his powerful delineations of Shakespearean characters, is a native of Devonport, which town he left at an early age. The Exeter critics say that he is equal to the lamented Edmund Kean." The first was written by William Gill, the editor, and the second by George Wightwick, the architect, who were the dramatic critics of those two papers.

His success at Exeter was so great that he played some of his characters for an entire week, and notably that of King Lear, a very rare occurrence in the provinces in those days. He filled the Exeter Theatre every night for a space of four months and a half, playing for his benefit Sir Giles Overreach in *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*, Guy Goodluck in *John Jones*, and Sponge in *Where Shall I Dine*, the house being crammed to suffocation.

A week afterwards he was announced to star at the Plymouth Theatre for five nights, in the following characters in succession,

viz. Virginius, Richard III., Sir Giles Overreach, Sir Edward Mortimer, and Othello, all of which drew good houses, and very laudatory criticisms from all the newspapers in the three towns of Plymouth, Stonehouse, and Devonport.

On the Friday night, however, a slight *contretemps* occurred, as Mr. Mude, the stage manager, who was announced for Iago, told him in the morning he could not get the words of the part, never having acted it; and as he understood Mr. Phelps had frequently performed it, would he have any objection to exchange characters, and so avoid changing the bill. Mr. Phelps said he had none, and would go on for Iago with great pleasure. This, however, not having been notified to the audience until the curtain was about to be drawn up, an uproar arose, which was only appeased by Mr. Mude addressing the audience, telling them the dilemma he was placed in, and of Mr. Phelps's handsome behaviour on being appealed to to get him out of it.*

During this short visit to Plymouth he made the acquaintance of Sir Henry Blackwood, Bart., a Captain in the Royal Navy, Colonel Palk, who commanded the 32nd Regiment, quartered at Devonport, brother of Sir Lawrence Palk, both amateur actors, known to his uncle Edmund, Mr. George Wightwick already mentioned, and Colonel Hamilton Smith. It was their habit, along with Phelps's elder brother and his son, to assemble nightly in his dressing-room after each performance; and it was here the nephew first imbibed a taste for things theatrical. Phelps returned to Exeter until the close of the season, and then came back to Plymouth with his family for the spring and early summer, reappearing on Easter Monday as King Lear, which was followed in turn by nearly all his Shakespearean tragic characters. He played for his benefit Lucius Junius Brutus in Howard Payne's tragedy of Brutus,

* This was the first time his family had seen him for nearly sixteen years, and of course the first time I had seen him at all; and well I remember how proud I felt of him as he sat at breakfast with me each day in my father's house. I may say that an affection at once sprung up between us more like that of father and son, and such as has rarely existed between uncle and nephew. Losing my father not long afterwards, his house became my home, and from that moment I was treated by him more like his eldest son, and so continued for some forty years.—W. M. P.

or the Fall of Tarquin, a performance of the most thrilling character.

He then went to live at Devonport, and got into the lodgings which had been occupied by Edmund Kean on his last visit to that town. He gave five performances at the Devonport Theatre, the scene of his earliest efforts, playing Hamlet for his benefit. At that theatre were Mr. and Miss Woolgar, the latter well known many years afterwards as one of the chief attractions at the Adelphi Theatre. Mr. Woolgar was the Iago, Ghost, &c. Mr. Addison (also a native of Devonport), who was afterwards at the Princess's and Drury Lane, played Marrall, Adam Winterton, and Polonius. Whilst here, by permission of the commanding officer, a drill-sergeant of the 32nd Regiment put Phelps through a severe course of drilling every morning for some weeks. At the Exeter and Plymouth theatres were the Misses Mordaunt, sisters of the celebrated Mrs. Nisbett, with whose family he became at once on terms of intimacy, which afterwards ripened into friendship. They all had an immense opinion of his abilities and powers.*

He had received overtures from Mr. Bunn to appear in the autumn at Drury Lane; but, having heard from Mrs. Nisbett that Mr. Webster had taken the Haymarket Theatre, and not caring to enter into any engagement by letter, he determined to take a run up to town and see what was best to be done.

In the following passage it is better, perhaps, that the nephew should speak in his own person. "*I started with him one fine summer's morning on the top of the Defiance stage-coach to pay my first visit to the metropolis, and well do I remember the following day, passing through the Strand at about 2.30 p.m., meeting the Lord Mayor and Corporation going in state to present an address of congratulation to the Princess Victoria on her having attained her majority. We passed through Temple Bar, and pulled up at the corner of Bouverie Street, Fleet Street, to go down to the Sussex Hotel, to which house he had been recommended.*

* One result of his intimacy with that family was that he induced the second and third sons to study for the Law, the youngest, James, as a solicitor, the eldest, Henry T. J., as a barrister. The latter was afterwards for many years one of the three Railway Commissioners.

"After attending to our toilets, and having had a short nap, we dined, and then strolled up the streets into the Strand, until it was time to go to Drury Lane Theatre to see Mr. Bunn. This latter he did not accomplish, for reasons which at this moment I do not remember; but we got put into the dress circle, and saw Taglioni and her brother Paul, with Gilbert and Miss Ballin, in *La Sylphide*.

"The next morning he had as his *vis-à-vis* at the breakfast table a fine, hearty-looking, elderly gentleman, with silver-grey hair, who, it appeared afterwards, had got put at this particular table for the express purpose of speaking to us. 'A very fine day, gentlemen,' he said, to which we both assented, for the sun was shining brightly. 'I believe I have the pleasure,' he continued, 'of speaking to Mr. Phelps, and am proud to be thus able to make the personal acquaintance of a gentleman to whom I have listened with such great delight on very many successive evenings during the past winter. I am Dr. Gibbs, of Exeter, and was your fellow-traveller yesterday, but little thought when I saw you on the top of the *Defiance* we were so soon to be located under the same roof.' After a short conversation on things in general, the doctor said, 'As I presume you are come to town professionally, may I ask what your views are as to the future?'

"My uncle replied, 'I have come up with the intention of making an arrangement with Mr. Bunn to appear at Drury Lane in the autumn, unless Mr. Webster can make an opening for me at the Haymarket after Macready's engagement is brought to a close. But if nothing comes of either one or the other, I have made up my mind to go to the United States.' Upon which Dr. Gibbs said, 'If you go there, I can be of some service to you. John Randolph Clay is my son-in-law,* and it will afford me great pleasure to give you a letter to him, and I'm sure he'll do all he can to assist you, and I need not perhaps tell you he holds a very prominent position in the Republic.'

"This idea of going to America was never carried out, for

* Since writing this, Mr. Clay died at his residence in Kensington on the 15th August, 1885. The *Times* gave an obituary notice of him.—W. M. P.

immediately after this conversation we started for Denham House, Hammersmith, the residence of the Macnamara family, and before leaving, Mrs. Nisbett gave him a letter of introduction to Mr. Webster as follows:—

“‘DEAR MR. WEBSTER,

‘Allow me to have the pleasure of introducing to you my friend Mr. Phelps, a provincial tragedian of very great talent and celebrity, and trusting the introduction may prove mutually advantageous,

‘I am, dear Mr. Webster,

‘Truly yours,

‘LOUISA CRANSTOUN NISBETT.’

“Returning from Hammersmith, he took me to Hyde and St. James’s Parks to look at the outside of Buckingham and St. James’s Palaces, and the club-houses in Pall Mall, &c., &c., and, though last not least in my estimation, to the Haymarket Theatre and King’s Opera House. After dining, and taking later on our cup of tea, we went to the stage door of Covent Garden Theatre to see Mr. Webster before he dressed for Lord Sands, the character he was announced for in the bills of the day, the play being the first three acts of Henry VIII., for the benefit of Mr. Rodwell, the then musical director of the theatre, Mr. Macready being Cardinal Wolsey, and Helen Faucit, Queen Katharine.

“Mr. Webster said his fame had reached his ears before that evening, and it gave him great pleasure to make his personal acquaintance. Mr. Webster, it appeared, in his early days had known some of our relatives at Bath, which knowledge at once put them at ease one with the other. He also showed him a critique of Mr. Wightwick’s in the *Plymouth Herald*, in which he said his performance of Richard III. was equal to Edmund Kean’s.

“In a few minutes, therefore, it was arranged that he should make his *début* at the Haymarket Theatre immediately on Mr. Macready’s engagement being concluded, in any character he chose, the length of the engagement and salary to be determined later on by letter. Asked if I should like to go in front, of course I replied in the affirmative, and Phelps saw that night

Macready act from *the front of the house* for the *first* time and the *last*; not so his nephew,—he saw him many times in most of his great characters during the following fourteen years. We stayed in London something under three weeks, returning to Plymouth by sea by one of the Dublin Steam Packet Company's boats. My uncle had been all round our coasts, as well as those of Scotland and Ireland, and was a pretty good sailor. We had not long returned to Plymouth ere news came of the death of William IV., and the accession of our present Queen."

He went to Exeter for the Assize week, and played Werner every night. Whilst in that city overtures were made to him on behalf of Mr. Macready to appear in the autumn at Covent Garden Theatre, which was to open under his management. Preferring that gentleman to Mr. Bunn, he replied that further on he might entertain the proposal, but for the present he considered himself bound to Mr. B. Webster for the Haymarket; but that as his theatre might be only kept open for the summer season, he probably would be in a better position to treat with him after his next interview with that gentleman; in the meantime he was going to fulfil an engagement at Southampton. Mr. Macready himself replied to this letter, and said, if he would let him know when he arrived at Southampton, a gentleman on his behalf would see him there, and that before that date he would endeavour to learn from Mr. Webster what his ideas as to his campaign were.

We next find him *at* Southampton, going through a round of his favourite characters, the theatre being under the management of Mr. Shalders, father of William Shalders, who between 1850 and 1860 was a scenic artist of some distinction in London. Mr. Shalders himself played all the second characters in each piece, as he had done with Mr. Phelps his first five nights in Plymouth. Whilst at Southampton, Mr. Macready, instead of deputing some one else, went down himself to see him act, and was so impressed that he determined to make an engagement with him to appear at Covent Garden. With that object he went round to the stage door and sent in a note, and after a short interview, invited Mr. Phelps to call on him at his hotel. Why he was so very anxious to make

an engagement with Mr. Phelps will appear a little further on, and Macready's own diary to a great extent admits the correctness of our views. The result of this interview was the exchange of signatures between them for a three years' contract; and this is how Mr. Phelps refers to the circumstance in the following letter to his wife:—

“SOUTHAMPTON, *Tuesday, August 15th, 1837.*

“MY DEAREST SARAH,

“As I know you will be anxious to hear how I got on last night, I lose no time in writing to you. Being here by myself, and having nothing to do last week, I fretted myself ill. Yesterday all day I was in such a state that I scarcely knew what to do with myself. I played as well as I could, but I thought very badly. I did not know if any person was in the house from London; but at the end of *The Iron Chest* a note was sent round to me from *Macready*, who had been there all the time *himself*. I was with him last night for upwards of an hour, and the result was I go to Covent Garden on the 16th of October. He wanted me to name my salary, which I declined doing until I have played in London; but at last I agreed to take the same salary that I may agree for at the Haymarket—which, if I succeed, I will take care shall be a good one, or I will not go at all.

“Write and tell me how you are, and the dear children. I hope *you* are better, and that Bob has not been worse. I fancy all sorts of things. I will write to you again in a few days, and let you know how long I shall be here, &c.

“My success here last night was very great, and Macready said he thought I should succeed in London.

“Give my respects to Billy,* and all of them, and let Latimer know how I am getting on. Write by return, my dear, and believe me ever,

“Your most affectionate husband,

“S. PHELPS.”

This was the first and greatest mistake Mr. Phelps made with respect to his future position and reputation, from the effects of which it took him nearly seven years to recover. This contract would not have been entered into by Mr. Phelps had

* The gentleman with whom they were residing.—W. M. P.

not Mr. Macready assured him that he had Mr. Webster's sanction for it, as that gentleman intended keeping the Haymarket Theatre open only until the end of September or beginning of October. Besides, he was himself engaged by Mr. Macready for Covent Garden. All this Mr. Webster, when Mr. Phelps arrived in town, denied; but it is difficult to believe that those assertions had not some foundation in truth. At all events, between the two managers Mr. Phelps suffered afterwards.

1837—1844.

On the 28th of August the Haymarket bills announced the first appearance of Mr. Phelps from the Theatre Royal, Exeter, in the character of Shylock. Miss Huddart was Portia. The house was crammed from floor to ceiling, and contained among the audience all the celebrities of the day. He was received with acclamations, and went on receiving plaudit upon plaudit until his final exit in the fourth act, when he was summoned to appear before the curtain, and was vociferously cheered.

There was no mistake about his success, or of its genuineness, for he had no friends in front, to his knowledge. He had brought to town with him letters to the critics on all the principal papers, but he did not deliver one, as he was determined to stand or fall upon his own merits.

The next day the *Times* in its criticism said:—"A new candidate for the honours of the high drama appeared at this theatre last night in the character of Shylock. He is, we understand, from the Theatre Royal, Exeter, and, as the bills averred, of very great provincial celebrity. The moment he entered on the scene you could discern the practised actor ripe for judgment, and he might have been certain of a favourable award even from a Daniel. In his costume on this occasion he wore a strange straw hat." It was a mistake about the hat—it certainly was a yellow one, and after the design (as his entire dress was) given him by Colonel Hamilton Smith at Plymouth, who was a great authority on costumes.

The *Morning Chronicle* said:—"His representation of the character was correct and judicious, but not remarkable or striking. . . . Kean threw something of sublimity into the character of Shylock; we felt as if an incarnate fiend stood before us. Such an effect as this Mr. Phelps had no power to produce. . . . He performed the trial scene very ably, and gave great effect to several passages. . . . Upon the *whole* Mr. Phelps's performance of this part is entitled to considerable praise, and shows him to be a valuable acquisition to the London stage. He was extremely well received." This critic was rather premature in desiderating his lack of power, and made no allowance for the nervousness of a first appearance in London. Agitated as he naturally was, Mr. Phelps contented himself with only trying to do what he succeeded in doing, viz., working the character gradually up for a grand climax at its close, rather than making an anti-climax in the third act, which Kean did, and into this same habit Phelps himself afterwards fell.

He had not a large black eye like Kean, but a grey one of fair dimensions, into which he could and did throw immense expression. We cannot imagine anything more powerful than Mr. Phelps's acting was in the scene with Salarino and Salanio, and afterwards with Tubal when at Sadler's Wells. His conception of the character was never exactly the same as Kean's, and this will be made apparent in one of his own letters towards the end of the volume.

His second character was Sir Edward Mortimer in *The Iron Chest*, another of Kean's great characters, in which he was again very successful. He had evidently risen in the estimation of the press. The *Times* said:—"Nature has been liberal in endowing him with a good figure, expressive features, and a splendid voice. His talents are of a very high order."

The elder Farren, who played Adam Winterton, said to him before the rehearsal commenced, "Keep up your pluck, my boy, and you'll be all right. Those who were acting with you in *The Merchant of Venice* told me you were so dreadfully nervous the first night you could not do yourself justice; I wish I'd been near you; I was in front, however, and did what I could for you there."

Charles Selby, the author-actor, met him not long after at Brighton, and on asking him what he thought of his friend Mr. Phelps, the veteran (for such he was comparatively then) said, "I consider he will soon prove himself the first tragedian of the day."

His next character was Hamlet, followed by Othello.* He played these four characters twice each, and Richard III. four times during his engagement. He rose in the estimation of his critics by each performance, and he had evidently done the same with his audience.

Mr. Webster's reply to a question put to him by Mrs. Nisbett during the run of Richard sufficiently proves this. "How is my friend Mr. Phelps getting on?" asked the lady. "Filling my treasury, and I don't think a better proof could be given of his success. I am only sorry I did not positively secure his services for as long a period as I could avail myself of them, instead of allowing another manager to profit by his abilities."

Mr. Phelps now began to buckle on his armour in real earnest; for he had shortly to appear at Covent Garden and measure swords with Mr. Macready. *Venice Preserved* was the piece proposed for his opening night, to be followed by Othello the following week. Mr. Macready gave him the choice of characters in the first, saying at the same time he would play Iago to his Othello. Mr. Phelps chose Jaffier, somewhat to his brother tragedian's surprise, who tried to dissuade him from it, saying that if he would take his advice he would play Pierre, as he had always found that character went better with the audience, and he wished him to have an opportunity of standing well with them at once.

Mr. Phelps, however, stuck to his original intention, and said he would only act Jaffier; but at the same time thanked Mr. Macready for what appeared very kind on his part, contrary to what he had often heard of his nature.

His success in Jaffier was quite equal to anything he had achieved at the Haymarket. Mr. Lemon Rede said in the *Sunday Times*:—"Mr. Phelps made his first appearance at this theatre last week in the character of Jaffier, and we were rather

* Criticisms on these two performances will be found on pp. 61 and 62.

curious to see how he would succeed in the larger house; for it is one thing to act at the Haymarket alone, and another to stand on the boards of Covent Garden by the side of such a great actor as Macready; but Mr. Phelps went through the ordeal manfully, and not only saved his distance, but came in well with him." He might have gone further and said, "neck and neck." He came in, however, so well that Mr. Macready would not act with him again in the same piece, but cast Mr. Warde for *Pierre* on the repetition of the tragedy.

A few nights after Mr. Phelps appeared as *Othello*, and Mr. Macready stuck to his original intention and played *Iago*. Mr. Phelps's success in this character was so great that it completely did away with his having any further chance of showing the public the full extent of his powers during the period he was under engagement to the man to whom he had now become a dangerous rival. From that night he was, in theatrical parlance, shelved. Macready either kept him from acting altogether, or offered him second-rate characters. Of course to this latter Mr. Phelps would not consent; for, as Edmund Kean once told the proprietors of Drury Lane, when asked to perform *Joseph Surface*, he had been accustomed to the first walk of the drama, and he would either appear in leading characters or none at all.

It is true when he looked over his contract he saw he had agreed to do anything he was called on to do; but then he never dreamed Mr. Macready would have asked him to act other than the principal or one of two principal characters in a piece.

He offered to throw up the engagement, but the only terms on which Macready would consent to do this were, that he should agree, under penalty, not to act again in London during the term he was under engagement to him, but to go into the provinces again. This of course he would not think of: it would have been a tacit admission on his part that his *début* had been a failure instead of the great success it had been universally acknowledged.

Finding that nothing would move Macready, he took Sir William Follett's opinion as to his being able to compel his manager to cancel the engagement or to bring him out in leading

characters two or three evenings a week; but that eminent advocate told him that he had been rather silly in signing the document he did, and that Macready had got him as fast as he could possibly wish, and could make him go on for anything he chose. He was then cast for Macduff, and although he did not refuse to play it, he and his manager were at daggers drawn from that moment. His performance of Macduff, however, which he played every Monday night for some four months afterwards, instead of lowering him in the estimation of the public, had an exactly contrary effect; for, although on the first night or two he did not attempt to act, but merely walked through the part, he afterwards threw his whole soul so entirely into the few scenes in which the worthy Thane of Fife appears, that he made the character stand out, as some thought, even beyond Macready's Macbeth. At all events it was the talk of all play-goers for years afterwards.

After this he was cast for a night or two as Rob Roy, a character that Macready had originally played himself, and, as it were, made his own, Mrs. Warner playing Helen McGregor. The only other characters he personated at Covent Garden in the season 1837-8 were, the First Lord in *As You Like It*; Cassius in *Julius Cæsar*, in which he made a great hit, so much so that it was only played two nights; Dumont in *Jane Shore*, one night; Adrastus in *Ion*, another hit, one night. The season 1838-9 he opened by playing Leonatus Posthumus for two nights, Vandenhoff playing Iachimo, his first appearance under the management; the First Lord in *As You Like It*, four nights; Dumont in *Jane Shore*, three nights, Macready being Hastings, and Vandenhoff the Duke of Gloucester; Macduff, five nights; Antonio in *The Tempest*, fifty-five nights; Father Joseph in *Richelieu*, thirty-seven nights—in this he made a great success also; and wound up the season by playing Charles d'Albret, High Constable of France, in *Henry V.*, twenty-one nights.

Thus ended his first engagement under Macready. It had had the desired effect, as far as Macready was concerned, for it had placed Phelps in a very different position to what he would have held had he continued at the Haymarket.

Having a family to support, consisting of a wife and four

children,* he had to take what offered. His only alternative was to go to America, and against this his wife set her face, unless they could all have gone together, a thing impossible at the time.

The Haymarket was the only house now open to him, and there he went. Mr. Webster continued then to put the names of the principal members of his company at the top of the bills, and on his first night they ran as follows:—

First appearance this season of the eminent tragedian,

MR. MACREADY.

First appearance of MR. PHELPS

AND

MISS HELEN FAUCIT.

Macready played Othello, Mr. Phelps Iago, Helen Faucit Desdemona; and on the following Monday Mr. Phelps played Othello, and Mr. Macready Iago. It was understood that they were to go on alternating these two characters, but his success in Othello was so emphatic that Macready persuaded the management to have the piece immediately withdrawn. There was a touch of animus in the promptness with which Mr. Webster acceded to the eminent tragedian's request; for by so doing he pleased Macready, and at the same time punished Phelps for going to Covent Garden so soon as he did, contrary, as he said, to the terms of their agreement.

The *Weekly Dispatch* of that period said that Mr. Phelps was as superior to Mr. Macready as Othello, as Mr. Macready was to Mr. Cooper as Iago; and John A. Heraud, author of several plays and poems, afterwards for many years the dramatic critic of the *Athenæum* and *Illustrated London News* in a publication called the *Sunbeam*, and the *New Monthly Magazine*, of which he was for a time editor, said, at the end of a very long criticism, "We have hitherto on the whole given the preference to Macready's Othello, to that of the elder Kean, but we are now convinced that the Othello of Mr. Phelps is the Othello of Shakespeare." Other criticisms were

* During this period—say 1838—his second son, Edmund, was born, at 98, Albany Street, Regent's Park.

equally laudatory, and led to the general belief that Mr. Webster would see that it was to his own interest to give him opportunities of again asserting his rightful position; but all he did up to Christmas of 1839 was to cast him for Master Walter in *The Hunchback*, and Jaques in *As You Like It*, with Ellen Tree in the principal female characters.

Phelps saw plainly now the only remedy was to bide his time, which he felt would come some day, as Macready himself had often told him it would at Covent Garden. "*Your time must come,*" said he, "but I am not going to try to hasten it. I was kept back by Young and Kean, and you will have to wait for me."

In the winter Phelps went to Drury Lane under Mr. Hammond's management, which turned out a failure, notwithstanding Mr. Macready, Mr. Elton, Mrs. Warner, and Helen Faucit were of the company. He was about to appear as King Lear and Virginius when the house was suddenly closed. He again went to the Haymarket, which in the summer of 1840 numbered in its company—besides himself—Macready, Helen Faucit and Mrs. Warner, Charles Kean and Ellen Tree, James Wallack and Mrs. Glover. The first thing that made any stir was Werner Macready (of course) playing Werner, Wallack Ulric, and he himself Gabor, the character that Vandenhoff had played with Macready and Wallack at Drury Lane. He was very successful in Gabor, and frequently the curtain rose on Macready and Mrs. Warner, and on Wallack as Ulric, with hardly any recognition by the audience, whereas, when Phelps appeared, he was received with a good round of applause.

The next character that he had a chance of doing anything with was Old Dornton, in *The Road to Ruin*, which play was produced with a cast which had never been surpassed, and has not been equalled since. He was eminently successful, and this in a principal character of a range in which the elder Farren was then considered to be without a rival. Well does his nephew remember the first representation and the effect he produced. James Wallack frequently for many years after said that he had seen one Old Dornton in his life and only one, and that Mr. Phelps's performance would not be effaced from his memory as long as he lived.

In the month of November Mr. Macready lost his daughter and during the week that he did not act, Mr. Phelps played Iago two nights, Wallack being the Othello; Jaques two nights, Helen Faucit being Rosalind, and Walter Lacy Orlando; Joseph Surface two nights, Wallack being Charles. Money was then produced, and ran eighty nights, during which period he did not appear.

During the latter part of 1840 a prospectus for private circulation was published by several dramatic authors to elicit opinions on the feasibility of opening Drury Lane Theatre for the purpose of producing new plays—their own, of course, more especially. Mr. Phelps was communicated with, and it was arranged that he should have a moneyed interest in the undertaking to the extent of £500, and his services were to be specially retained as the leading tragedian. If they succeeded in getting the theatre, they had been promised, through the Hon. George Anson, the highest patronage of the Court. This was very nearly being carried into effect; but some person connected with the theatre communicated what was going on to Mr. Macready, who said, "That shall not be;" and he at once put himself in communication with the committee of the theatre in such a way as led them to drop the authors' proposal, at all events while there was a chance of his becoming lessee. It resulted in his taking it.

Phelps again opened at the Haymarket somewhere about Easter in 1841, playing with Charles Kean, Wallack, and Ellen Tree, all kinds of characters, some not better than third-rate. He was at last cast for Friar Laurence in *Romeo and Juliet*, which he said he would *not* act, and that he would sooner throw up his engagement—which was only one by word of mouth for three years, at an annually advancing salary.*

Then came his celebrated letter to the *Spectator*, describing Mr. Webster's treatment of him. Among others there occurred the following passage:—"As a constant reader of your paper,

* On my going for his salary on the Saturday morning (which I frequently received), I was told by old Mr. Carter, the treasurer (of many years' standing), to tell him that he had been fined £30 for refusing to act Friar Laurence, but that it would not be enforced, as Mr. Webster accepted his offer to leave the theatre.—W. M. P.

and admiring its excellent criticisms on the arts, and particularly that of my own profession, the stage, I think it only just to the public to let them know through your columns the cause of my having ceased to be a member of the Haymarket company. I was cast for the character of Friar Laurence in the approaching performance of Romeo and Juliet, which I refused to act, not because I think the character beneath my abilities, or indeed those of *any* actor living or dead, but because I have lately been cast for the Friar Laurence of every piece, which was contrary to my understanding with Mr. Webster when I entered into my present engagement with him. My position in his system has been only that of a satellite. Still I have acted Othello with Mr. Macready, Macduff with Mr. Kean, the Hunchback and Jaques with Miss Tree, and Old Dornton with Mr. Wallack, on each and all of which occasions the public has, to say the least of it, been extremely indulgent, which has led frequently to a request on my part to be allowed to shine by my own light. He has as frequently acknowledged in his opinion my ability to do so, but as frequently has desired me to wait. I am now thrown out of an engagement until the winter theatres open."

The editor's remarks on this letter were of a highly complimentary kind.

It was not very long after, however, before one of the authors already referred to, Mr. George Stephens, then a man of considerable means, and the author of *The Manuscripts of Erdély*, from which he had written a tragedy called *The Patriot*, conceived the idea of having it put on the stage with the introduction of songs, thereby evading the Act which precluded such from being produced at other than the Patent Theatres. With this object the Lyceum Theatre was taken for two months. Here Martinuzzi (which *The Patriot* was called in its acting edition) was produced under Mr. Phelps's superintendence and stage management. He himself played the great Cardinal, Elton the Lover, Mrs. Warner the Queen-Mother Isabella, and Miss Maywood the Young Queen. It was played every night of the week with great success; his own performance and that of his friend Mrs. Warner being described as two as fine pieces of acting as the modern stage had seen. Many of Mr. Macready's own friends and admirers complimented

Mr. Phelps highly both by letter and by word of mouth on his fine acting and stage management. Mr. Stephens himself was more than satisfied.*

His next important step was to re-engage with Mr. Macready for three years during the latter's management of Drury Lane. During this engagement they came to know each other better, and a fast friendship ensued, which was only severed by death.†

He now went into the provinces for a time, and, prior to appearing at Drury Lane, he accepted a starring engagement at the Surrey, and acted Lucius Junius Brutus, King Lear, Virginius, and other characters, with great success. The *Sun*, speaking of his performance of the first-named character, said :—

* This poor man, I may here state, lost the whole of a large fortune in the Railway panic of 1845, only four years afterwards.—W. M. P.

† One fine morning during the run of *Martinuzzi*, I was walking in the grounds surrounding Rose Cottage, which lay between the King's Road, Chelsea, and the river, where he resided for nearly four years, when I saw a gentleman standing at the gate demanding admittance of the servant who had answered the bell. I immediately went forward to ask his business, when I found him to be neither more nor less than Thomas James Serle, who I had heard was to be Mr. Macready's acting manager during the coming campaign. I took him into the drawing-room, and told my uncle his presence was required by a friend, without saying who it was. To myself I said, "He has come to try and wheedle the governor (as I called him) into joining Macready again, but he won't if I can help it" (I may say I was still very wrath with Mr. Macready for his treatment of Mr. Phelps at Covent Garden, as well as several times afterwards at the Haymarket). "He shall sooner go to America," I said, "if nothing is to be done at Covent Garden." From the manageress of that theatre *he had* received overtures to act in the event of her again opening it. The interview lasted a considerable time, and at the close I saw that Serle had succeeded, for he spoke and looked like a satisfied man. I was immediately joined by my uncle, who told me he should go to Drury Lane, that Serle had been commissioned by Macready to offer him such terms to fill the position for which Vandenhoff had been *specialy* engaged the second season at Covent Garden, viz. always A2, and occasionally A1, that, with his family, myself among the number, he could not refuse. I endeavoured to dissuade him from it as strongly as I could, saying I was quite sure all he would get out of such an engagement would be a repetition of the Covent Garden one. However, he thought otherwise, and although his wife joined with me, he soon signed and sealed.—W. M. P.

“Mr. Phelps commenced an engagement here for a limited number of nights last evening, and chose the character of Lucius Junius Brutus, in Howard Payne’s tragedy of Brutus, for his *début* before a Surrey audience. This character was written expressly for the late Edmund Kean, then in the zenith of his fame, and in the full enjoyment of all his energies, and Kean at once made it his own. Since his death the tragedy has seldom been produced, the stage possessing no actor qualified to represent the arduous character of Brutus. This reason, however, no longer exists. Mr. Phelps is an excellent representative of Brutus. Since the days of Kean there has been no Brutus at all approaching Mr. Phelps. His oration over the dead body of Lucretia was beautifully given, his warm and natural style of eloquence contrasting most favourably with the monotonous syllabic declamation to which of late we have been too much accustomed. The whole of the two last acts was magnificent; from the first expression of horrible suspicion that his son may be a criminal, in the fourth act, to the fearful condemnation of that guilty son, at the conclusion of the fifth, when the stern duty of the patriot has been fulfilled to the letter, the Roman becomes humane, and the Consul softens into the man and the father—all was given with a truthfulness to nature which stamps Mr. Phelps as an actor of high genius. We hope frequently to see him in impassioned characters such as this, which give full scope for the exhibition of the play of the feelings. He was called for at the fall of the curtain, and loudly applauded.”

He now prepared for the opening of Drury Lane, and got up the words of Shylock, which he had not acted since his *début* in 1837, in the event of Macready not getting off his engagement at the Haymarket, but promised, if he did, to play Antonio, the merchant, so as to strengthen the cast. Macready *was* let off by Webster, so he himself played Shylock.

During his first season at Drury Lane he acted with great success Antonio, for fifteen nights; Stukely in *The Gamester*, five nights; the Ghost in *Hamlet*, four nights; Macduff, eight nights; Iago, one night; Pierre in *Venice Preserved*, three nights, and other characters.

The second season he played Adam in *As You Like It*, twenty-two nights; Belarius in *Cymbeline*, four nights; Stukely, one night; Ghost in *Hamlet*, six nights; Gloucester in *Jane Shore*, one night; Cassius, three nights; Major Oakley in *The Jealous Wife*, one night; Hubert in *King John*, twenty-six nights; Colonel Damas in the *Lady of Lyons*, twelve nights; Macduff, ten nights; Leonato in *Much Ado about Nothing*, twelve nights; Iago, eleven nights; Lord Lynterne in *The Patrician's Daughter*, eleven nights; Dentatus in *Virginius*, two nights; Gabor in *Werner*, two nights; Old Dornton in *The Road to Ruin*, two nights; and Lord Tresham in *The Blot in the 'Scutcheon*, three nights, and other characters. On his performance of the principal character in Mr. Browning's play, the *Era* and the *Morning Post* said as follows:—

“The manner in which the play was acted reflects the highest credit on the Drury Lane company, and the absence of Mr. Macready from the cast was as little regretted as it possibly could be. Phelps, who performed the brother, was fearfully effective in his impersonation of the angry and agonized patrician, who shrinks from the fear of the blot upon his 'scutcheon. In the great scene in which he detects the lurking lover, and, dragging him out into the light, taunts him till he draws his sword,—although he will not name himself, or uncover his face,—the actor was powerful, and almost terrific. The passion of his rage reminded us vividly of Edmund Kean, and such praise is no common compliment.”

“In the acting of the drama it was generally very excellent. Phelps took the part which Macready would otherwise have acted, and if we missed a *little* of that refinement which carries the latter actor so triumphantly through his blotchy mannerisms, it is due to Mr. Phelps to say that in other respects he gave a singular passion and power to the proud brother, which we believe could have been shown by *no other* actor than himself. The whirlwind of rage and hate with which he compels Mertoun to draw were terribly true. The whole soul—its love, its masculine sense, and its reason—seemed lost in the madness of the moment; and each savage phrase was thrown out with a lightning-like rapidity and violence from the cloud and storm of his passion, that brought the reality

and fear of that dark and momentary insanity singularly home to the listeners. His utterance of these lines was admirable :

“ ‘ Ha, ha ! what should I
Know of your ways ? A miscreant like yourself—
How must one rouse his ire ?—A blow ?—that’s great
No doubt, to him ! one spurns him, does one not ?
Or sets the foot upon his mouth—or spits
Into his face—come—which, or all of these ? ’

“ The actor was forgotten in the terrible truth of his fiery utterance. His hearers felt passion had given that hour to the devil, and recognized in the certainty of Mertoun’s death that the unravelling of the tangled love and guilt was one of blood and crime. Equally fine was the manner in which the man-slayer suffered the madness of his guilt to subside when the lover of his sister lay dying at his feet. And as an isolated beauty, still earlier in the drama, we may mark the tone in which loathing, and affection, and disbelief were struggling as he bade Mildred ‘ not to lean upon him,’ after he has heard from his retainer Gerard the tale which involves her dishonour. At the conclusion Mr. Phelps was vociferously called for.”

Nothing can prove more strongly than the two foregoing criticisms how very successful he was in the delineation of Tresham, and how much he was like Edmund Kean, at that time at all events, in his fine bursts of passion and energy.

Another great hit he made during this second season of Macready’s management was in the character of Hubert, in which he showed an unrivalled power of exhibiting fine manly pathos. The *Times* and *Morning Post* spoke of him in this part as follows:—

“ Phelps was an admirable Hubert, an actor with more manly pathos than any on the stage ; he managed his pathos with great skill. The silent dejection when first Arthur was confided to his care was a presage of coming ill ; the heavings of the heart while he strove to be stern to the innocent child, showed the increasing struggle which was going on, till at last all resolved itself into the burst of tears at the words, ‘ I will not touch thine eyes,’ which was the most powerful appeal to the sympathies of the audience throughout the piece.”

“ As Hubert is the finest character in the poet’s conception, so

was it acted with the most consistent power. The range of acting open to Phelps is limited, but in that range we know none who touch him. His apparent roughness is like the gnarled trunk of an old oak—the mark of real strength. He is one of the few living men who touch our hearts, and this, not by loud words and hurried delivery and strong tones (although his strength is plentiful), but by the genial under-current of living feeling which is ever leaping and throbbing under the surface of his acting. He calls forth a tear by the only magic that can do so—the strong persuasion that his grief or passion is actually grappling with the very roots of his own heart.”

His performance was the talk not only of the town, but of the Court; for Her Majesty and the Prince Consort saw him in this character, and by command of the Queen he afterwards sat to Sir William Ross for his portrait as Hubert. Mr. Macready told him that he considered his acting of the character was one of the very finest things he had ever seen.

The *Spectator* paid him a very high compliment on his acting of the character of Lord Lynterne in the *Patrician's Daughter*, and amongst other things said “he looked the proud old patrician to the life, and moved and spoke more like a man who had moved in the higher grades of society than any other person in the piece.”

Between the two Drury Lane seasons, in the summer of 1842, he went to the Haymarket, principally to act with Mr. and Mrs. Charles Kean in a new play by Sheridan Knowles, entitled *The Rose of Arragon*; and by his performance of *Almagro* in that piece (a part written especially for him, as those for the Keans were also) he added another garland to his renown. The critics all spoke very highly of it; indeed, he so completely threw his friends above referred to into the shade that they, as soon as they could with decency, cried *peccavimus*, and went on the Continent for the benefit of their health. *Leman Rede* in the *Sunday Times* said, “The interest of the third act rests entirely on his shoulders, and bravely has he achieved his work. His scene with Cortez and Nunez, where, under the disguise of friendship, he endeavours to undermine Alasco's credit with the people, was as magnificent a piece of acting as we ever beheld.” Douglas Jerrold in *Punch* headed a short paragraph,

An unusual piece of Liberality, and then said, "Mr. Phelps on the stage of the Haymarket Theatre publicly presented Mr. Charles Kean last evening with a very handsome silver extinguisher."

He also received the following letter respecting this performance :—

"28, BURTON STREET, TAVISTOCK SQUARE,
5th June, 1842.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"I am commissioned to communicate to you the pleasing intelligence that I had the agreeable duty of returning thanks for you at Mr. Dow's celebration of Mr. Knowles's triumph, in the shape of a supper to some thirty or forty guests after the representation of the play last night. I am charged to express to you their sense of the ability with which you supported the part of Almagro, thereby contributing in an extraordinary degree to the success of the play. I perform an official duty in making this communication; my own heart, however, as well as my hand, goes along with the duty, and makes it a great pleasure. Believe me, my dear sir,

"Yours most sincerely,

"JOHN A. HERAUD."

After the departure of the Keans, he played several of his favourite characters, amongst them Sir Giles Overreach (the elder Farren playing Marrall), and Duke Aranza in the *Honeymoon*, the first times before a London audience. At the end of August that year he also acted a few nights at the Plymouth Theatre, and on his performance of Sir Giles Overreach, the *Devonport Independent* had the following :—

"This is the first time Mr. Phelps has gratified his numerous friends in this quarter of the globe with his presence since his engagement at the Plymouth Theatre in 1837. He has now passed the trying ordeal of a London audience, and by the services of several seasons has proved himself—and the voice of criticism establishes the proof—a tragedian second to none now on the boards. His performance of the sordid, mammon-worshipping hero of Massinger's truthful play, was, in reality, a splendid piece of acting. From the moment of his entrance, in the second act, until the final exhaustion of physical and mental faculty, by the frustration of his villainous speculations, in the last act, he bore the impress of an actor gifted with real intellectual

powers, and fully capable of realizing the conceptions of the author. The Sir Giles of Mr. Phelps, we do not hesitate to pronounce the most perfect the stage can now produce. What could exceed the oily, smoothed-faced manner with which he confided his purpose, to grind the poor man to his nefarious will, to his creature Marrall. His interview with his daughter, where he reveals that he would have her 'right honourable'—aye, even at the expense of that which to a pure mind is most dear, honour—was finely executed, and the manner in which he delivered those few lines of caution to his daughter, lest her modest inadvertence 'might spoil all,' we shall never forget. In the last act, Mr. Phelps was electrical!—never since the days of Edmund Kean was effect produced so harrowing to mind and body as we witnessed in the convulsive throes of this demon of avarice and ambition in his struggles to obtain the mastery over his conscience. He would be forced to 'Hell like to himself;' and when he lay a stiffened corse at the feet of his daughter—the child whom he would have slain in the impotence of rage—the audience seemed relieved from the existence of a monster, and by their loud and long-continued plaudits, afforded a double compliment to the talented tragedian. At the conclusion of the play, Mr. Phelps was loudly called for, nor would the delighted auditory cease their importunities until they had again and again assured him that his efforts had proved triumphantly successful."

At the close of Mr. Macready's management of Drury Lane, which only lasted two seasons, as it had at Covent Garden before, he presented Mr. Phelps with a cheque for three hundred guineas (which, with what he made by his benefit, put £10 a week on his salary for the time the theatre had been open, from December 1841 to June 1843), saying, he wished he could have doubled it, as a slight recognition of his appreciation of the handsome and noble manner in which Mr. Phelps had assisted him to make the cast of several plays as strong as they possibly could be.

Mr. Phelps had voluntarily offered to play parts which would have been cast to Warde, the elder Farren, and Bartley, if they had been in the theatre, in addition to those which Vandenhoff would have played, and for which he was specially engaged.

Mr. Macready offered him afterwards a very handsome share of what might be made by their both going to America, if he would go with him, and alternate such characters as Brutus and Cassius, Othello and Iago, Jaffier and Pierre, &c., &c.; but his wife here exerted her powers, and said, "No, you have at last got free from Mr. Macready, and if you want to go to America, stay until after he has returned, and go relying on your own merits."

In the autumn of 1843 Henry Wallack opened Covent Garden Theatre, and engaged Mr. Phelps, Mr. Vandenhoff, and Mr. Anderson to appear in a new play of Mr. Boucicault's, and several plays of Shakespeare's, which had three good characters in each, which they were to alternate. But the thing was done in a hurry, and if Mr. Macready's management did not succeed, it was not very probable that Mr. Wallack's would. It did not, and the house was soon closed. Phelps went then to Bath for a time with Mrs. Warner and Anderson, and on his performance there of Iago, the *Bath Herald* said:—

"We cannot, we think, even though we be charged with indulging in fulsome adulation, too highly extol the matchless performance of Mr. Phelps as the double-faced Iago. We have seen many attempt this character, but never did we see it so inimitably sustained as on this occasion. It was not merely that the text was delivered with correctness and fluency, or that his look and attitude were in perfect keeping with the part—there was something even more, which we find it difficult to describe, but which many who were present could not, we think, but have been forcibly struck with. We mean the inimitable manner in which he identified himself with the character, so that from the very first moment he appeared on the stage, until his exit in the last scene, the illusion was so admirably kept up, that the spectator only saw before him the hypocritical, cold-blooded, and remorseless villain; indeed, so strongly impressed was this idea upon the mind, that when Othello stabs him, a feeling of delight (if we may so express ourselves) thrilled the bosoms of many present. We have never heard more enthusiastic applause greet any actor than was so frequently showered upon Mr. Phelps, there being on more than one occasion three distinct rounds."

After this engagement was concluded, he went a round of the

principal provincial theatres during the winter, but was mostly at Liverpool for several weeks at a time, under the management of Mr. Malone Raymond at the Liver (Vandenhoff being at the Royal). He played Lear for one whole week together, and Macbeth likewise. He also acted Hotspur, Ford in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and for the last time in his life *Romeo*.*

The following criticism on his first appearance in *Hamlet* appeared in one of the morning papers:—

HAYMARKET THEATRE.

“Last night Mr. Phelps, of whom we have already made favourable mention, appeared for the first time in the character of Hamlet—the most arduous in the whole range of the drama, inasmuch as the royal and philosophic Dane is not only expected to exhibit in his own person ‘the glass of fashion and the mould of form,’ but to illustrate by his own example the rules which he has himself laid down for the players’ especial observance. In these respects Mr. Phelps proved himself a skilful navigator, escaping both Scylla and Charybdis, being never ‘too tame,’ or ever ‘o’erstepping the modesty of nature’ in his delineation of the part, but fully sustaining by it the reputation which he had acquired by his previous performances. That he has maturely studied the character is evident, from the perfect ease and self-possession which his representation throughout evinced; and if in some cases he did not quite carry out his conceptions, a repetition of the performance will enable him to do so, backed as the present was by the general approbation of a well-filled house. The scenes in which we thought him best were his first interview with the Ghost, in which there were some slight but natural deviations from the accustomed practice of his predecessors; in the play scene, in which he received very great applause; and lastly, in that with the grave-digger. The interview in his mother’s closet was well conceived, and, indeed, well acted, but neither so powerfully or so effectively as we are persuaded he will make it upon repetition. In person, deportment, and action, Mr. Phelps will bear comparison with any whom we have seen assume the royal Dane, and, like all of them, he seems in age to exceed the assigned limit. His features are handsome and flexible; his voice is of good quality, of various tone, and of considerable compass; and, what is most remarkable, without being at all a copy of any, he occasionally reminds you, either in voice or feature, of Macready, Vandenhoff, Kean, &c.”

* I was present at this performance, and than the impassioned parts nothing could have been finer. He admitted himself he never could feel the love scenes, and preferred performing Mercutio, which was certainly one of his finest high Comedy parts, equal, I have been told by competent judges, to Charles Kemble’s.—W. M. P.

In the *Theatrical Observer* of September 15, 1837, appeared the following criticism on his first appearance in Othello:—

HAYMARKET THEATRE.

“The tragedy of Othello was acted at this theatre, last night, that Mr. Phelps might appear in another new character, that of the noble Moor. In speaking of his performance of this difficult part, we might observe that as in his previous efforts, there was much to admire, and but little to cavil at; he is certainly an actor of considerable judgment, and the perfect ease and self-possession he displayed in his representation of Othello, evinced that he had maturely studied the character. He discovered no new and unlooked-for excellences in the part (nor did we expect he would), but there were repeated bursts of feeling and energy, which were highly effective, and elicited great applause.”

The two following, in which Mr. Phelps's name occurs, are examples of what provincial play-bills were half a century ago:—

THEATRE ROYAL, YORK.

MR. BUTLER respectfully informs the Public, that an arrangement having been entered into with the Trustees, the THEATRE will

Re-Open on Monday Evening, April 19, 1830,

For the remainder of the usual Season, when will be performed ADDISON's admired Tragedy (not acted here for 25 years) of

CATO,

THE ROMAN PATRIOT.

Cato	...	...	MR. BUTLER	Syphax	...	MR. HENDERSON
Lucius	...	...	MR. HALL	Junius	...	MR. DEARLOVE
Porcius	...	...	MR. YOUNG	Titus	...	MR. W. REMINGTON
Sempronius	...	...	MR. ROBSON	Senators, Messrs. WILSON, GRIEVES, &c.—Soldiers, Citizens, &c. &c.		
Marcus	...	...	MR. SHAW	Marcia	...	MISS STANFIELD
Decius	...	...	MR. ANDREWS	Lucia	...	MRS. ANGEL
Juba	...	...	MR. PHELPS			

A COMIC SONG, BY MR. ANGEL.

The whole to conclude with (2nd time) the admired Melo-Drama of

THE SOMNAMBULIST;

OR, THE PHANTOM OF THE VILLAGE.

M. de Rosambert, Col. of Musketeers, Seigneur of Village ... MR. PHELPS.

THEATRE ROYAL, PRESTON.

For the benefit of MR. PHELPS.

On Monday Evening, July 22nd, 1832,

Will be performed the celebrated Play taken from SIR WALTER SCOTT's beautiful Romance called

IVANHOE;

OR, THE JEW OF YORK!

NORMANS.

Lucas de Beaumanoir (Grand Master of the Templars)	...	MR. GRAINGER
Sir Brian de Bois Guilbert	... ..	MR. CULLEN
Sir Reginald Front de Bœuf	... ..	MR. MADDOCKS
Sir Maurice de Bracey	... MR. FISHER	Prior Aymer ... MR. REID

Knights Templars, &c. &c.

SAXONS.

Cedric of Rotherwood	MR. SAUNDERS—Ivanhoe	MR. WATKINS BURROUGHS
Unknown Knight	MR. BOWES—Wamba (Cedric's Jester)	MR. HUDSPETH
Gurth (Cedric's Swine-herd)	... ..	MR. COOPER
Lady Rowina (Ward to Cedric)	... ..	MISS COOPER
Ulrica (a wild Saxon Woman)	... ..	MRS. HUGGINS
Elgiva	... MRS. COOPER	Alicia ... MISS DUGAN

OUTLAWS.

Robin Hood	... MR. PENN	Friar Tuck	... ..	MR. GRAINGER
Midge the Miller	... ..		... ..	MR. PHILLIPS

JEWS.

Isaac of York	... ..	MR. PHELPS
Rebecca (his Daughter)	... ..	MRS. WATKINS BURROUGHS

A COMIC SONG BY MR. HUDSPETH.

PAS-DE-DEUX BY MISS DUGAN AND MASTER SAUNDERS.

To conclude with the interesting Melo-Drama called

THE FALLS OF CLYDE:

OR, THE GYPSIE'S HAUNT!

Donald (a Scotch Piper) MR. PHELPS.

HIS CAREER AT THE THEATRE ROYAL, SADLER'S WELLS.

1844—1845.

It was shortly after the close of his last engagement at Liverpool, in the spring of 1844, that he conceived the idea, with his friend Mrs. Warner, of becoming, jointly with Mr. T. L. Greenwood and her husband, lessee of the Theatre Royal, Sadler's Wells, which was opened under the management of Mrs. Warner and Mr. Phelps, the latter being stage manager, on the Whit Monday of that year.

Mr. Phelps now commenced his great life-work, which was to continue for over eighteen years, and in these eighteen years he put, as Tom Taylor said after his death, a whole life.

The following address was issued:—

“Mrs. Warner and Mr. Phelps have embarked in the management and performance of Sadler's Wells Theatre in the hope of eventually rendering it what a theatre ought to be—a place for justly representing the works of our great dramatic poets. This undertaking is commenced at a time when the stages which have been exclusively called ‘National’ are closed, or devoted to very different objects from that of presenting the real drama of England, and when the law has placed all theatres upon an equal footing of security and respectability, leaving no difference except in the object and conduct of the management. These circumstances justify the notion that each separate division of our immense metropolis, with its 2,000,000 of inhabitants, may have its own well-conducted theatre within a reasonable distance of the homes of its patrons.

“For the North of London, they offer an entertainment selected

from the first stock drama in the world, reinforced by such novelties as can be procured by diligence and liberality, intending that the quality of their novelties will constantly improve, as time will be given to procure and prepare them; and a *company* of acknowledged talent, playing such characters as they must be called upon to sustain at Drury Lane and Covent Garden, were those houses now devoted to the drama.

"The attractions are placed in a theatre where all can see and hear at a price fairly within the habitual means of all.

"They commence under the disadvantage of very short preparation, and they are aware that some errors and deficiencies are inseparable from such a circumstance; they trust that their names are a sufficient guarantee for the honest endeavour to deserve further patronage, and they promise that the trust of the public and its encouragement shall be met by continual zeal and liberality, increasing constantly with the means of showing it. They will endeavour to confirm what may be found satisfactory, supply what may be at first deficient, and above all, exalt the entertainments to meet the good taste of the audience. Stage Manager, Mr. Phelps; Acting Manager, Mr. T. L. Greenwood; Treasurer, Mr. Warner."

The opening performance was *Macbeth*, thus cast in the principal characters:—

Macbeth	...	...	...	...	Mr. Phelps.
Banquo	...	...	...	...	Mr. H. Lacey.
Macduff	...	...	...	...	Mr. H. Marston.
Rosse	...	...	...	...	Mr. Aldridge.
Siward	...	...	...	...	Mr. Graham.
Lady Macbeth		...	...		Mrs. Warner.
Hecate	...	...	...	...	Mr. Clement White.
The three Witches	...	...		{	Mr. Forman,
					Mr. Wilson, and
					Mr. Morelli.
First and Second	{			{	Miss Lebatt, and
Singing Witches		...	...		Miss Emma Harding.

In the course of the evening an occasional address written by Thomas James Serle was spoken by Mrs. Warner.

The theatre was crammed to suffocation, and the following notice appeared in the *Athenæum*:—

“The announcement that we made last week will sufficiently explain the unwonted circumstance of our noticing either the ‘doings or pretences’ of this almost forgotten theatre. The altered state of the law permits now the legal performance of the five-act drama everywhere, so that the distinction between major and minor is *legally* abolished, and, to quote the bills, ‘has placed all theatres upon an equal footing of security and respectability, leaving no difference, except in the object and conduct of the managements.’ Law, therefore, has done what law could do, and that is, in the present instance, undone all that it had previously done. Law is needed to explain and *repeal* law; and for the latter purpose is especially needed where monopoly affects the progress of art. There is a relation, however, in the present subject which law cannot touch.

“Society may have outgrown the drama—and by many it is suspected that such is actually the case in England. The last accounts from America also say, that although Mr. Macready is playing to crowded audiences at the Park Theatre, they are not fashionable ones. It is something that there *crowded* audiences, though not fashionable, are possible. Here, on the contrary, all classes have long ceased to crowd the theatre to witness the legitimate drama. Opera and ballet still have their votaries, and Mr. Bunn has this week received a testimonial, as it is called, for revivifying Old Drury by their means; and now that Old Drury has in effect no exclusive patent, the proprietors have a right to make it profitable by any and every legal and moral means.

“Not alone Old Drury, however, but every other theatre more or less connected with the West End of London has pursued the same course, and the receipts have proved that the managers were right in doing so. The present time, then, declares against Shakespeare and legitimists; nevertheless, there is always somewhere an outlying portion of the population to which amusements, voted vulgar or obsolete by the more refined, are yet the best they can afford or enjoy. A lord’s cast-off clothes will make a gentleman of the Sunday operative. Among 2,000,000 of inhabitants the metropolis must have somewhere a population too remote, by reason either of condition or situation, from fashionable influences to be entitled to despise ‘the ruder

sports' in which our fathers delighted. It had been frequently suspected that the neighbourhood of Islington and Pentonville contained many such old-fashioned people, from the fact of the theatre there being always profitably conducted, and sometimes succeeding with the Shakespearean drama, even when under legal interdict. But the *locale* was despised by high caste actors, as well as high caste admirers. Destiny has at length found there the only theatre in which the persecuted drama could find refuge; and Mrs. Warner and Mr. Phelps—two among the best tragic performers now in London—have been glad to make it their asylum.

"On Monday last they produced *Macbeth*, with new scenery, and got it up certainly in a style which elicited audible exclamations of astonishment from the usual visitors in the boxes. Such, too, was the curiosity excited, that it was necessary to pile up elevated forms in the lobbies for the literally overflowing audience, where, we conjecture, they could see little and hear less. Mrs. Warner enacted the part of Lady Macbeth with great care and force. Mr. Phelps we have never seen before in *Macbeth*, and it was certainly the ablest performance in which he has yet exhibited. Since Edmund Kean's we have seen nothing better for vigour and vivid effect. It is essentially distinct from, and stands in contrast with Mr. Macready's, which, however fine and classical in its conception, is but too obviously open to the Scotch sneer of presenting 'a very respectable gentleman in considerable difficulties,' so studied is it in all its parts, and subdued into commonplace by too much artifice; fretfulness, moreover, substituting high passion in the fifth act. The straightforward and right earnest energy of Mr. Phelps's acting, on the contrary, made all present contemplate the business as one of seriousness and reality; while the occasional pathos of his declamation thrilled the heart within many a rude bosom with unwonted emotion. The spectators were visibly agitated, and incapable of resisting the impulse."

Macbeth was acted for an entire week. On the following Monday, 3rd June, *Othello* was produced, and also acted for a week with the same success: Phelps being the Moor; Henry Marston, Iago; Hudson, Cassio; and John Webster, Roderigo. Miss Cooper was Desdemona, and Mrs. Warner played Emilia.

Monday, 10th June, *The Stranger* was acted, Phelps playing the *Stranger* (ever a fine performance with him), and Mrs. Warner Mrs. Haller.

Thursday, 13th June, *The Jealous Wife*. Mr. Oakley, Mr. Phelps; Major Oakley, Henry Marston; and Mrs. Oakley, Mrs. Warner.

On the 17th June he played *Werner* for the first time in London, and with great success. Further on will be found several criticisms on his performance of this character, in which he rivalled Macready in the opinion of most play-goers, notwithstanding it was one in which his predecessor particularly shone. This was also played for an entire week.

On 24th June he appeared, for the first time since his first appearance at the Haymarket, in the character of *Shylock*, H. Marston playing *Bassanio*, and Hudson, *Gratiano*; Mrs. Warner again appearing as *Portia*.

On 27th June *The School for Scandal* was produced, and he played *Sir Peter Teazle* for the first time in London, Marston playing *Joseph Surface*, and Hudson, *Charles*; Mrs. Warner, *Lady Teazle*.

On 1st July he produced and acted *Virginius*, Hudson playing *Ilcius*, and Marston, *Dentatus*; Miss Cooper, *Virginia*.

On 18th July he did *The Rivals*, playing *Sir Anthony Absolute*, also for the first time in London; and on 29th July for the first time *Hamlet*, he himself being *Hamlet*; Marston, the *Ghost*; George Bennett, the *King*; A. Younge, *Polonius*; and Mrs. Warner, the *Queen*.

On August 9th *The Wife*, by Sheridan Knowles, was produced. He played *Julian St. Pierre*; Marston, *Leonardo Gonzago*; and George Bennett, *Ferrado Gonzago*; Mrs. Warner, *Mariana*.

On the 21st August he acted, for the first time, Macready's great character of *Melantius* in *The Bridal*, which was then and ever after one of his very finest performances. Mrs. Warner was *Evadne*; Miss Cooper, *Aspatia*; and Marston, *Amintor*.

On 19th September he acted *Sir Giles Overreach* in *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*, for the first time under his own management. Marston was *Welborn*, and A. Younge, *Marrall*; Margaret, *Miss Cooper*.

On 30th September he produced *King John*, he himself

playing John; George Bennett, Hubert; Marston, Faulconbridge; Mrs. Warner, Constance.

On 30th October he produced Massinger's *City Madam*, and played Luke Frugal for the first time, Mrs. Warner playing Lady Frugal.

On 13th November, Bulwer Lytton's play of *The Lady of Lyons*, Phelps appearing as Claude Melnotte, a character that, in the course of a few years, he performed for over one hundred nights.

On 15th November, *The Wonder*, he playing Don Felix; Jane Mordaunt, Mrs. Nisbett's sister, being the Donna Violante.

On 30th January, 1845, he brought out a new play by T. J. Serle, entitled *The Priest's Daughter*, in which he himself, Marston, and Mrs. Warner performed the principal characters.

On 20th February he produced for the first time *Richard III.*, and from the text of Shakespeare in lieu of the Colley Cibber edition, which had so long held possession of the stage. He played Richard; Marston, Clarence; George Bennett, Buckingham; John Webster, Richmond; and Mrs. Warner, Queen Margaret.

On 27th March he played for his own benefit *Rover in Wild Oats*, and *Nicholas Flam* in Buckstone's *petite* comedy of that name.

On 3rd April he acted Frank Heartall in *The Soldier's Daughter*, and *Nicholas Flam* for Mr. Greenwood's benefit; and on the 7th he acted Sir Edward Mortimer in *The Iron Chest*; and on 10th of same month, for the first time, Cardinal Wolsey for the benefit of Mrs. Warner, she herself playing Queen Katharine.

Thus closed his first season of management. The theatre had been open for two hundred and sixty-two nights, commencing 27th May, 1844, and closing on 10th April, 1845. Ninety-seven pieces had been represented,* viz. twenty-six first pieces and seventy-one after pieces. Eight pieces had been Shakespeare's.

* The *Bridal* was played thirty nights; *Hamlet*, thirty-three nights; *Lady of Lyons*, thirty-six nights; *Richard III.*, twenty-four nights; *City Madam*, sixteen nights; *King John*, eighteen nights; *Othello*, ten nights; *Macbeth*, fourteen nights.

Annexed are a few of the criticisms which have been preserved on his acting of some of the foregoing characters, as well as on his productions of the several plays as a manager.

On *The City Madam*, Jonas Levy, in *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper*, said :—

“Massinger’s play of *The City Madam* has been produced at this theatre. It was originally produced at the Blackfriars about 1632, and was revived for the third or fourth time in 1814, under the title of *Riches, or Wife and Mother*, for the purpose of exhibiting the extraordinary powers of Kean in the character of Luke ; but it was played for a few nights only. *Riches* has been played once or twice since that period, Mr. Macready sustaining the principal character, but he failed to create any great impression ; and now the management of Sadler’s Wells have produced not *Riches*, but *The City Madam*, and it must be confessed that whoever may be the adapter, he has shown considerable taste and judgment in what he has done. Suffice it to say, that the principal character, Luke, is not a natural one ; he is more of a mask than a human being. His hypocrisy and cringing servility are carried to a point at which they disgust ; everything manly is so completely effaced in him that the interest of the author is lost. Mr. Phelps’s performance of the part was excellent ; he gave it an effect that did not belong to it, and raised it to assume an importance which it scarcely merited. Some of his transitions were as happy and as striking as we ever witnessed in any stage performance ; the crawling, abject spirit and the soft fellow-feeling of the humble petitioner were ably given. His delighted, dream-like amazement, when informed of Sir John’s death, and that he had left him the whole of his fortune, was remarkably fine ; and his triumph on finding Lady Frugal and her daughters entirely in his power was magnificent.”

The *Times* said :—

“Phelps, who played Luke, shines in masculine pathos. No one can better convey the notion of a stern, rugged nature broken unwillingly into grief. The most orthodox venerator of original texts would scarcely fail to be moved at the genuine affection with which he embraced his niece ; and the character generally was exceedingly well played. His reading is that of one who has carefully and judiciously studied the bearing of his words. His intercession for the poor debtors before his brother, Sir John Frugal, was an excellent specimen of eloquence. The house was quite full, and the audience was such an one as a dramatist ought to delight in. The hearty applause which followed the conclusion showed that they had heartily appreciated all they had heard and seen. There seems to be no doubt that the experiment of planting the poetical drama in the North of London has proved perfectly successful.”

On Hamlet the *Weekly Dispatch* :—

“The arduous part of the Prince was sustained by Mr. Phelps, who strongly gave indication that he had not undertaken the task without a deep appreciation of the character. In several scenes he evinced great judgment, and made several successful points that excited general admiration. Hamlet’s interview with Horatio, previously to the mock play, was full of interest and correct discrimination :—the anguish of mind under the consideration that he was destined by ‘a voice from the tomb’ to fulfil a deed of revenge was well conveyed, and the great soliloquy terminating in these words,

‘The play’s the thing

Wherein I’ll catch the conscience of the king!’

denoted Mr. Phelps’s intimate knowledge of Hamlet’s character. Great energy was also displayed in the remarkable ebullition of feeling that takes place after the discovery of the *King’s* guilt; in short, so admirably was this conceived, that Mr. Phelps in his acting gave to us the true meaning of the poet, it being in this part of the drama where a waywardness of thought has led many to the suspicion that the mind of Hamlet was unhinged—in fact, that he is described by Shakespeare, here and throughout, as labouring under something more than a feigned insanity. The play is altogether well got up, the scenery is superb and finely adapted. The house was crowded, and never did we witness an audience where intensity of feeling so universally prevailed. We understand that this noble tragedy will be performed twice or thrice every week for some time to come.”

On King John the same paper said :—

“King John has been produced with much effect, and great credit is due to the manager for the excellent manner in which it is put on the stage, the accuracy of costume, and the cast of the different parts. Mr. Phelps’s conception and acting in the character of King John deserves the highest praise.”

The *Critic* (newspaper) :—

“Of Phelps we have always entertained the very highest opinion. He has more real *genius* in him than any actor of our time, and it is now making itself manifest. He was kept down by the overbearing power of Macready; but not disadvantageously, for all the while he was gathering strength and acquiring a mastery of his high art, the fruits of which are now ripening. A small theatre is the true test of an actor’s genius. Tricks won’t do there, all must be genuine; and therefore it is that really great actors are always greatest and the most enjoyable where they are the centre upon which eye and ear are absorbed, unattracted by aught about them. It gives us pleasure to see our favourite not only asserting his genius, but finding it acknowledged; and while we tender him every good wish, we venture to entreat him to continue to study as he has hitherto done, and to be

content with nothing less than the station that is certainly within his reach. The last play produced at this theatre is *King John*, and it has been brought out with a magnificence that would have done no discredit to Drury Lane. Phelps's personation of the monarch is extremely fine, but he must beware lest he unconsciously act Macready's instead of his own conception of the character. Mrs. Warner's Constance is magnificent. It is scarcely necessary to add an earnest recommendation to all lovers of the drama to enjoy the treat of a visit to Sadler's Wells. It is ample reward for a ride of any distance; we trust, however, that it being now proved not only that there is genius to embody the British drama, but an audience to appreciate it, they to whom belongs the merit of having elicited the talent and the good taste that were declared to be departed, will remove to some theatre more central, but not much larger, where they may hope, not in vain, nightly to gather round them the intellect of this metropolis."

The Observer :—

"There seems but a poor chance of Macready returning to the metropolis as an actor, unless, as was suggested some months ago, he again take upon himself the management of Covent Garden Theatre; and in the meantime Phelps may be said to be usurping some of his great parts at Sadler's Wells, and with so much applause, public patronage, and success, as to lead many persons to consider him no insignificant rival. We are heartily glad that the talents for which we have always given him credit have thus had room to display themselves, which perhaps they never would have had if he had not embarked with Mrs. Warner in an experiment which could only have answered by the exertion of extraordinary ability by both. As long as they can continue to attract such houses as at present reward their labours, they need look for no other professional employment."

The John Bull :—

"We feel conscious that the excellent company now established at this theatre have not received from us, nor indeed from the press generally, the degree of attention to which they are justly entitled. Through the sagacity with which Mr. Phelps and Mrs. Warner discerned the probable success of an enterprise which most people regarded as hopeless, and through the energy and talent with which they have prosecuted it, they have achieved complete, substantial, and, to all appearance, permanent success. They have converted a place of entertainment, in a remote part of London, which formerly was dedicated to spectacle and buffoonery, and in our day had derived its renown solely from the exploits (wonderful in their way) of Grimaldi the clown, into a home for the Tragic Muse—a home, too, not unworthy of her, ejected as she has been from the gorgeous palaces which she once occupied. They have confirmed and illustrated the truth of an observation frequently made, that the respectable portion of the

middle class of society form the most serious, the most attentive, and most strongly interested audience of a lofty and classical dramatic performance. And last, though not least, they are raising the moral tone of the stage, by showing that the audiences of the small theatres do not require to be attracted by monstrous melodramas. For what they have done, and are doing, Mr. Phelps and Mrs. Warner well deserve the support of the public; and we are gratified to see that they receive it.

"Since the commencement of the season this company have acted several of the best plays of Shakespeare, particularly Hamlet and King John; they have revived Beaumont and Fletcher's tragedy, The Bridal, with an effect equal to that which it produced at the Haymarket, Mrs. Warner (as before) playing the part of Evadne, and Mr. Phelps the character formerly sustained by Macready; they have likewise revived Massinger's powerful play The City Madam, which, under the title of Riches, was first made known to the modern public by Kean; and lastly, they have now produced the best of Bulwer's plays, The Lady of Lyons. In the revival of The City Madam, a change is made in the *dénouement*, which, we think, is injudicious as well as uncalled for. The sudden revolution in the character of Luke strikes us as forced and unnatural. The play, however, is admirably acted, and produces a great effect. Mrs. Warner's Lady Frugal is a performance of very considerable merit. The conception of the character is just and ably executed. Her transition from the haughty, imperious woman to the humble and abject suppliant is beautiful, and evinces the skill of a consummate actress. Phelps's Luke, too, is excellent both in conception and execution. He is, however, *occasionally a little* too violent, differing in this respect from Kean's performance of the part, who produced *his* most terrible effects by the expression of *deep* and concentrated passion.

"In speaking of The Lady of Lyons as the best of Bulwer's plays, we do not imply admiration of his dramatic genius. Its subject is borrowed from several sources, particularly The Honeymoon; and it has its share of the author's characteristic faults of affectation and mannerism. Nevertheless, on the stage it is both entertaining and interesting, and in the two principal characters—the proud beauty and her impassioned lover—it affords great scope for histrionic talent. Both these characters were very finely performed by Mrs. Warner and Mr. Phelps; and the powers of the performers were evinced by the deep impression they made on the audience. The effect of this play (and the remark may be extended to all the plays represented at this theatre) is much increased by the *general* quality of the performance. The company does not (like many others) consist of a star or two and a heap of rubbish; but its members are adequate to the parts allotted to them, and perform them with intelligence and verisimilitude. On Wednesday evening, when we saw The Lady of Lyons, the theatre, notwithstanding the state of the weather, was crowded in every part; and this, we understand, is generally the case."

On Richard III. the *News of the World* said :—

“The name of Shakespeare has lost none of its attraction. If any doubt remained, it must have been removed by the sight of the vast audience collected on Thursday night to witness the representation of King Richard III., ‘with the restoration of the original text.’ From the proscenium to the back wall there was a sea of human faces, the very backs of the box lobbies being lined with seats for the accommodation of the spectators, and every nook and corner from which a glimpse of the stage could be seen, occupied by anxious visitors. It was a gratifying sight to behold so much interest taken in the restoration of a great dramatic work, for it disproves the foolish notion that the public taste for exalted productions of art is dead, or perverted; and it also must have been cheering to the manager, who had been unsparing in the exercise of his talents, his industry, and his capital in the production of the play; having an enduring faith in the power of Shakespeare’s genius. The play has been placed on the stage with remarkable care and attention; the records of antiquity appear to have been searched for authorities in costume, scenery, and manners; and while the stage arrangements are wisely kept subordinate to the play itself, they yet constitute an admirable representation of the habits and customs in Court life and City life of the time. Cheap-side, with a view of which the play opens, the ancient palace architecture, the Tower, and Baynard’s Castle, with approach of London’s Mayor by water, are extremely picturesque scenes; and the last act presents a succession of effects, striking not less by their natural simplicity than by their dramatic excellence. Instead of the continual changing of scene and running about of parties, first to one tune and then to another, which has hitherto been the practice according to the directions of Cibber, and which has always brought to our mind the rival booths at a fair, the action takes place as it has been described by Shakespeare. Richmond is observed marching onward with his army; and then we are carried to Bosworth Field, where the tent is literally set up in the presence of the audience. On the other side of the brook that divided the contending armies Richmond’s tent is then raised, and the constant movement of leaders of the two forces, the variety of costumes and banners, and the earnestness of every actor employed, constitute a picture of remarkable perfection. Night having closed in with a kind of dioramic effect, two cressets are planted at the entrance of Richard’s tent, which throw a faint light over the forepart of the scene; whilst in the background the ghosts of Clarence, Lady Anne, the Princes, and Buckingham are advanced between the two tents by some ingenious process, but so far only as to be dimly visible to the audience; this partial obscurity, and the deep stillness that is preserved on the stage, just allow the imagination to play without over-exciting it; and the effect is extremely good. The dawn of morning is accompanied with the distant hum of preparation, then the faint roll of drums is heard mingling with the bugle call, and increasing with

the impatience of the troops. The fight and final struggle of Richard and Richmond were represented so vividly and impressively, that at the fall of Richard the conclusion of the piece was delayed by the continued shouts of the audience.

“The Richard III. of Shakespeare is a different play to the Richard III. which (honoured with the name of Shakespeare) has for many years held possession of the stage. The argument that has prevailed in favour of Colley Cibber’s version is, that Shakespeare’s play is undramatic. Whether this argument be good or not is for the public now to determine. They have the original text, with such alterations only as were necessary either to reduce the play within acting length, or obviate some otherwise insurmountable difficulty. We refer to the second act. In lieu of two scenes with the Duchess of York and the children of Clarence in one place, and with the child of Edward in another, and a third scene with some citizens, the subject of their discourse is worked into a conference between Gloster, Buckingham, and Hastings, &c., after King Edward is carried out dying; when Gloster sounds his doubtful friends as to the probability of their assisting him in his attempt to obtain the crown. A scene after the retirement of Edward, and the reappearance of the Queen lamenting his death, was necessary; and it is a matter for discussion whether the scene thus arranged has been conceived in a becoming spirit, and executed with due reverence for the great author. The whole of the language employed being adapted from other parts of the play, may be urged in its favour. This is the only alteration of great importance; in other places compression only is observed, with occasionally the introduction of a few lines (Shakespeare’s) to conclude an act or make a graceful exit.

“The acting was good throughout, extraordinary pains having evidently been taken to impress upon actors of even the smallest parts the necessity for careful action; by such means an even tone and character were secured. Mr. Phelps’s conception of the part of Gloster is in accordance with the text,—he does not make the King’s brother a coarse and brawling assassin, shouting his thoughts at street corners, and throwing himself into galvanistic fits when under more than ordinary excitement. He embodies the subtle, bold, designing villain, whose triumphs are won as much by artifice as fraud. The scene with Lady Anne (impressively played by Miss Jane Mordaunt), the Council scene, where he denounces Hastings, the sounding of Buckingham as to the murder of the princes, the engagement of Tyrrell to do the bloody work, and the whole of the fifth act, were marked by the actor’s discrimination and power. The death-struggle was terrific. Mrs. Warner’s tragic powers are well adapted for the character of Queen Margaret, and the impression which this able actress made in the delivery of its tremendous passion was great. King Edward was represented by Mr. Ward with good sense and propriety. Clarence found an able representative in Mr. H. Marston, and George Bennett was good in Buckingham.”

On The Bridal the *Morning Sun* said :—

“ The legitimate drama, like persons in a decline, seems to have been quite renovated by a return to a locality in which it was nurtured during the days of its youthful vigour ; and Sadler’s Wells, under the management of Phelps and Mrs. Warner in the days of Queen Victoria, bids fair to rival what the Fortune Theatre (situated in the same district) was in the days of Queen Elizabeth, under the management of Philip Henslowe and Edward Alleyn. Night after night is Sadler’s Wells crowded by a most respectable and highly attentive audience, to witness the masterpieces of Shakespeare and our glorious dramatists, performed as they can now be performed at no other theatre in London. Since the commencement of the season the company has numbered amongst its members Phelps, Mrs. Warner, Miss Cooper, Marston, Hudson, and John Webster, and more recently George Bennett has joined them, and Sadler’s Wells can now boast of the most complete tragedy company that could, by possibility, at the present moment be assembled within the walls of any metropolitan theatre. The audience part of the theatre has been newly fitted up, and the arrangements for the accommodation of the visitors to the boxes, which are under the superintendence of our old friend Notter, are admirable. The tragedy of *The Bridal*, which was performed some few years since at Covent Garden, was produced here last evening with the most brilliant and most deserved success. It is an adaptation by Sheridan Knowles of Beaumont and Fletcher’s *Maid’s Tragedy*. This play, one of the most powerful and poetical conceptions that ever was penned, and which is inferior only to the creations of Shakespeare, was laid aside at the Restoration, because it was considered to smack somewhat too strongly of disloyalty ; and Waller, who adapted it to the stage, attempted to render it fit for representation by altering the *dénouement*, and making the king repent, instead of falling by the hand of Evadne. But the graceful but feeble Waller was no match for the masculine vigour of Beaumont, who is generally considered to have had the principal hand in writing this tragedy. They were as ill-assorted as Amintor and Evadne. Waller’s alterations were soon forgotten, and the tragedy again ceased to be an acting play. About four years since it was revived by Macready, who intrusted Sheridan Knowles with the task of adapting it for representation. The task could not have been confided to fitter hands. Possessing the same heartiness of feeling, the same vigour of thought, the same vein of poetry as Beaumont himself, Knowles set about his labour of love—for to him it must have been a labour of love—in the true spirit : he has cut out a great deal which would not be tolerated on the stage in these days, and has added three scenes, but so thoroughly has he been imbued with Beaumont’s spirit, and so artistically has he introduced his new matter, that a spectator who had never read the original would be puzzled to discover where the alterations had been made. The cast last night was very strong. We had Phelps as Melantius, Marston as Amintor, G. Bennett

as the King, Mrs. Warner as Evadne, and Miss Cooper as Aspatia. Phelps, as Melantius, looked and acted the honourable, high-minded, courageous, but injured soldier to the life. There was an intensity in his acting in the scene with Amintor, in which the latter discloses to him the cause of his sorrow, that told most effectively; and in the scene with Evadne, in which he taxes her with her guilt, and makes her swear to be revenged, he was quite appalling. We know of no lady on the stage who could have personated the haughty Evadne so to the life as Mrs. Warner did. In the scenes with Melantius she was magnificent. We never saw Marston to greater advantage than in the character of Amintor. He seems to have made this line of character completely his own. George Bennett, as the King, did that which he has so often done before—made a second-rate character of first-rate importance by his excellent acting. Miss Cooper had but little to do as Aspatia, but that little was performed beautifully. Take it altogether, we know not when we have seen a tragedy acted so admirably as a whole—there was not a weak point in it. The costumes were magnificent and appropriate, and the play altogether was put upon the stage with the greatest attention. The applause was enthusiastic at the fall of the curtain, and Phelps and Mrs. Warner were called for and received with the customary honours. The house was crowded to suffocation in every part.”

1845—1846.

The second season commenced on 12th May, 1845, with Henry VIII., in which Phelps played Cardinal Wolsey; G. Bennett, the King; Marston, Buckingham; A. Younge, Lord Sands; and Mrs. Warner, Queen Katharine.

On 15th Every One has his Fault was acted, with Marston and Mrs. Warner in the principal characters.

On 19th William Tell was done, Phelps playing the hero, a performance in which he always shone; Marston, Michael; and G. Bennett, Gessler; Mrs. Warner playing Tell's Wife.

On 21st of the same month he produced a new play by Mr. Sullivan, called The King's Friend, in which he played Henry IV., King of France, and Marston the Marquis de Rosny, Mrs. Warner and Miss Cooper playing the Ladies. This piece was to have been produced in 1840 at the Haymarket, when Wal-lack was to have played the King and Phelps the Minister, which he ought to have done on this occasion, as he would have made more of that character than Marston did, and would have assured

the play a longer run, as was generally thought. He did it, however, to satisfy the author, who thought Marston could not act the King, which, in our opinion, was a mistake. It was nevertheless successful, and went well with the audience.

On 2nd June another new play, called *The Florentines*, was produced, which was also successful, but does not call for any very particular remark.

On 18th June he first produced Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton's play of *Richelieu*, and acted the character of Richelieu for the first time, which also then and ever after was one of his very finest performances. He must have played it several hundred nights from first to last. Marston was De Mauprat; G. Bennett, Baradas; S. Buckingham, De Beringhen; A. Younge, Joseph; and Mrs. Warner, Julie.

On 10th July Knowles's play of *Love* was produced, with Marston, G. Bennett, Mrs. Warner, and Miss Cooper in the principal characters.

On 21st July he acted the character of the Gamester (a great part of Garrick's), in which he was then and ever after very great, and superior, in our opinion, to Macready. G. Bennett was Stukely; Marston, Lewson; and Mrs. Warner, Mrs. Beverly.

On 24th *Othello* was done again, for the first time this season. How great he was in this character the various criticisms, extending over his entire life, from the pens of the ablest dramatic critics of his time, amply testify. Marston played Iago with him oftener than any other actor.

On 31st he again played Werner; and on 4th August, for the first time under his own management, *Jaffier in Venice Preserved*, Marston playing Pierre, and Mrs. Warner, Belvidera.

On 18th *Macbeth* was produced, for the first time this season, with the same cast as last year.

On 27th August he placed on the stage, also for the first time, Massinger's play of *The Fatal Dowry*. He acted Romont (a fine performance); Marston, Charalois; G. Bennett, Rochfort; and Miss Cooper, Beaumelle.

On 18th September *Isabella* was acted, with Mrs. Warner, G. Bennett, and H. Marston as Isabella, Don Carlos, and Biron.

On 29th September *Hamlet* was acted, for the first time this season, with same cast as before.

On 9th October Pizarro was produced. He played Rolla for the first time at this theatre; Marston, Alonzo; G. Bennett, Pizarro; Mrs. Warner, Elvira; and Miss Cooper, Cora.

On the 23rd *The Bridal* again done. Cast as before.

Shakespeare's *Lear*—from the original text—was produced on 5th November, he playing *Lear*; Marston, *Edgar*; G. Bennett, *Edmund*; A. Younge, *Kent*; H. Mellon, *Gloster*; Scharf, the *Fool*; and Miss Cooper, *Cordelia*.

On 10th Sheill's *Evadne* was acted, to give him relief, G. Bennett, Marston, and Mrs. Warner in the principal characters.

On 19th Shakespeare's *Winter's Tale* was produced for the first time. He acted *Leontes*; G. Bennett, *Antigonus*; Marston, *Florizel*; A. Younge, *Autolycus*; Mrs. Warner, *Hermione*; Miss Cooper, *Perdita*; and Mrs. H. Marston, *Paulina*.

On 28th November Douglas was played, Miss Cooper performing Douglas; Marston, *Glenalvon*; and Mrs. Warner, *Lady Randolph*.

On 4th February, 1846, *The Lady of Lyons* was acted, for the first time this season. Cast as last year.

On 23rd *Virginius* was also acted, for the first time this season, and had a good run.

On 9th March Bulwer Lytton's *Money* was produced for the first time at this theatre, with a cast in many respects better than at its original production at the Haymarket in 1840. He himself played *Alfred Evelyn* much finer, as many thought, than Macready did. George Bennett played *Stout*, an inimitable piece of acting, and far beyond the performance of David Rees, the original; Mellon played *Graves*, certainly better than Benjamin Webster; Dudley Smooth was played by Marston, infinitely superior to *Wrench* (then an old man). Mrs. Marston was *Lady Franklin*; Miss Cooper, *Georgina Vesey*; and Mrs. Warner, *Clara Douglas*—the two first quite equal to the originals, Mrs. Glover and Miss P. Horton, the latter not quite so good as Helen Faucit.

On 16th March he produced *Jane Shore*, he playing *Hastings*; G. Bennett, *Gloucester*; and Marston, *Dumont*; Miss Cooper, *Jane Shore*; and Mrs. Warner, *Alicia*.

The theatre closed for the second season on 5th May, with *Julius Cæsar* for his benefit, and had been open two hundred and ninety-six nights. The principal pieces produced during

the season were Richelieu, The Fatal Dowry, King Lear, and A Winter's Tale, on which we submit the following criticisms.

The *Times* said :—

“ Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton's play of Richelieu, or the Conspiracy, has been produced here, and in a manner which reflects infinite credit on the management, as well as the company to which the play is intrusted. Mr. Phelps's impersonation of the old Cardinal is a very complete, masterly performance, full of power and intelligence. The mixture of craft, indomitable energy, and dauntless courage, tempered with a sort of *bonhomie*, with which the author has invested the character of Richelieu, could not find a more perfect interpreter than in Mr. Phelps, whose rugged but significant style fits itself naturally to the part. The vivid and sententious language, strongly dashed with the irony of world knowledge, with which the character opens, was delivered with caustic vigour and well-turned pointedness, the keen, piercing glance and authoritative manner of the old statesman being admirably preserved. In the latter part of the play, where, disgraced, he still preserves his lion-like energy, and braves the underminers of his power, Mr. Phelps's powerful bursts of threatening defiance, given with all the feverish excitement of old age, brought down rounds of applause; and in the last scene, when the treachery of Baradas is unmasked, and he suddenly rouses from his assumed exhaustion, the triumphant expression of successful policy, and the withering sarcasm which lighted up his countenance, had an overwhelming effect on the house.”

The same paper, in speaking of The Fatal Dowry, in a very long critique said :—

“ If we wish by witnessing theatrical performance to revive the reminiscence of the old national poetical drama of England, to this theatre alone must we resort. The Haymarket remains true to its purpose by adhering to prose comedy, but in bringing forward neglected specimens of what is somewhat loosely called the ‘ Elizabethan ’ school, Mr. Phelps and Mrs. Warner are honourably singular, or—if some fastidious critic should object to the word ‘ singular ’ being predicated of two persons—honourably ‘ dual. ’ To them are we indebted for a revival of Richard III. in its original form, of The City Madam, and, to come to the business of last night, of The Fatal Dowry.”

After a long description of the play the critic goes on to say :—

“ The play acts very well. Perhaps in the whole range of the drama a character could not be found more suitable to Mr. Phelps than the burly, honest Romont. No one could better have assumed unsophisticated roughness and sudden impetuosity. The interview between him and young Novall, in which that contemptible fop was very ably represented by Mr. Buckingham, was exceedingly effective,

and the courage on the one hand and the fright on the other stimulated the audience amazingly."

On *The Winter's Tale* the same paper contained the following:—

"The last achievement at this excellently managed theatre has been the production of *The Winter's Tale* of Shakespeare. One does not often see a play got up in such a creditable style, with such a thorough-going desire of making all that can be made out of a given material. There is a certain life infused into this Sadler's Wells representation of *The Winter's Tale* which displays itself in the exertions of actors employed, which asserts itself in the costumes, which speaks through the very appropriate scenery, and which altogether leaves a most exhilarating impression on the spectator, provided he has allowed himself to be carried on by the spirit of the proceeding. The part of Hermione was excellently sustained by Mrs. Warner. Mr. Phelps, though occasionally given to over-vehemence in his renderings of emotion, plays with genuine feeling always. The torments of his jealousy as Leontes are unmistakable, and his pathos strikes home."

The *Patrician*, speaking of *The Fatal Dowry*, said:—

"Mr. Phelps's personification of Romont is masterly; he pictures the rugged manner, but manly bearing, the bold resolve, but exquisite sensibility, of the soldier, with the touch of a master. How full of force are his earlier addresses to the corrupt judges, and to the frivolous wife, and the unthinking inmates of Charalois's matrimonial establishment! But the scene which proves Phelps an actor of more than ordinary power, is that stirring secret interview between Romont and the coward fop who would seduce the bride of Charalois. He gave thrilling effect to the superb burst of indignation—

'You are a miserable slave, not fit
To tie the sword of Charalois about him,' &c., &c.

Equally excellent was his rapid transition from doubt to forgiveness and praise, where Romont hesitates to acknowledge Charalois, until the husband tenders him his right hand, red with the blood of the adulterer and his victim, which the soldier grasps, exclaiming, 'My friend! . . . Thou art redeemed.' Withering, also, was his appellation of the base old judge—'Thou butcher of the law, and sanctified assassin.' We purpose shortly resuming the subject of this theatre."

On *King Lear* the *Athenæum*, the *Court Journal*, *Bell's Weekly Messenger*, and the *Observer* had as follows:—

"It is gratifying to the critic when at last he finds that his admonitions have been effective. We have contended for the purity of Shakespeare's text, and have welcomed every approach to it on the stage. We therefore commended Mr. Macready's revived version of *King Lear*: but, nevertheless, regretted the dislocation of some of the scenes, and the injurious falling of the curtain at the end of the

first act on Lear's curse. We have lived to see all this at length effectually reformed. King Lear as now performed at this theatre follows the text and order of Shakespeare's scenes, with some few inevitable omissions, but with no alterations. The scene, hitherto omitted, between the King and the Fool, which closes the first act, excels in pathos—painful, it is true, but faithful to the best feelings, and melting the heart into tenderness. It was capitally acted, and fully justified both the genius and judgment of the poet. The tragedy is placed upon the stage, too, in that ideal and simple style of scenic appointment which befits an altogether fabulous period. It has accordingly all the air and the severity of a classical drama. Only in one respect has too much been done. The storm into which poor Lear is turned out by his not only ungrateful but unfeeling daughters, is too naturally rendered—it is not imitation, but realization. Mr. Phelps's performance of Lear may be easily excelled in royal dignity and in physical vigour, but as a *pathetic* piece of acting is unrivalled. Mr. Phelps never forgets the father—never seeks to surprise, but contents himself with exciting pity for the wrongs that the outraged parent suffers, and the natural relations that are insulted in his person. It is much to the actor's credit that he sacrificed his professional ambition to the proprieties of the scene. Having restored the curse to its original place in the drama, Mr. Phelps was judiciously careful not to give it undue effect by being too vehement. He chastened and toned it down to the proper emphasis required by its rightful position. Was it on that account less effective with the audience? Not a whit. The tragedy is of course, in its restored state, long; but there is a felt progression in it which interests the spectator and approves itself to the judicious. We announce this restoration with pleasure—for, to speak the truth, it is the only one which has been made in perfect good faith, and with a full reliance on the poet."

"We lately had occasion to express our delighted admiration at the performance of Lear, under circumstances which permitted an appreciation of its various and wondrous beauties—namely, at a theatre where they could be made visible and audible. We have now to repeat that delighted admiration—but 'with a difference.' On Monday night Mr. Phelps produced Lear at Sadler's Wells, thus completing his triumph over 'time and the hour,' by proving that the loftiest, the purest, and the profoundest of all the works of our great bard is at least as capable of exciting the sympathies of the (so deemed) 'outside barbarians' of the wilds of Islington, as it is of the more 'enlightened' audiences further west. Though it is impossible to speak of the Lear of Mr. Phelps without comparing it—mentally, at least, if not verbally—with that of Macready, yet nothing can possibly be more unlike than the two, both in conception and in execution. And if that of Mr. Phelps was, as a whole, not so great and perfect in both particulars, or in either, there were many points of it in no degree inferior, and one or two that were more touching, delicate, and pure than the corresponding

parts of his great predecessor in the part. The curse in the second act was decidedly inferior to that of Macready, both in the depth of its shadows and the intensity of its lights; if (still to speak in the language of a sister art) it had equal breadth of outline, and equal vigour and truth in the fillings in and the accessories, it had less of that variety and vividness in the colouring of his moral pictures, in which Macready stands alone. In this great individual feature of the part Mr. Phelps was, in fact, less successful on Monday night than, from subsequent portions of his performance, we are fully persuaded he is capable of being, and probably has been, on the succeeding nights; for in those other and subsequent points of the character which correspond with this terrible one, he was eminently successful, both as regards moral conception and physical exertion. There was a fearful beauty in some of his bursts of passionate anger, which we have never seen exceeded. But it was in the last two acts that Phelps proved himself, not merely an excellent and admirable, but a *great* actor. In the first scene with Kent and Edgar there was an utter abstraction and self-absorption—an entire escape from all external objects and influences—a sort of moral dissolution of all ties except those which bind him for ever to his woes and his wrong—that we have never seen surpassed. Again, in the two concluding scenes—the recovery of his faculties, the recognition of his child, and the closing with the corpse—there was, we are disposed to think—or rather, were compelled to feel—a greater depth, simplicity and unity of purpose, and a more perfect embodiment of that purpose, than even in the great performance of Macready himself. On the whole, for our limits forbid further detail, the Lear of Mr. Phelps is a noble performance, worthy to be witnessed and scrutinized by the warmest admirers of Shakespeare.”

“Addison declared that Tate in altering King Lear ‘had destroyed half its beauty,’ yet Tate’s alteration retained possession of the stage until very lately, its admirers justifying their preference by the authority of Dr. Johnson, who said he was so much shocked by the original play that he could not endure to read again the last scenes till he undertook to revise them as an editor! The hold which this opinion had on the public mind was manifested in Mr. Macready’s adaptation, our great tragedian, impressed with the merits of the original play, and desirous of exhibiting it in a perfect form, nevertheless making certain sacrifices (referred to in our notice of the performance at the Princess’s Theatre), in order to accommodate his adaptation to the supposed taste of the audience. Mr. Phelps, with a more lively faith in the power of Shakespeare, on Wednesday produced the entire play as it came from the mind of its immortal author; and the admiration which it awakened was marked by the abundant applause of the audience. In the endeavour to give a faithful representation of this tragedy, as much attention appears to have been given to the minutest details as to its most commanding features, and although it is to the chief actor the public is indebted for the restoration, there is a studious

avoidance of anything like a sacrifice of propriety to engage attention for the leading part. King Lear is not the one engrossing object, surrounded by cyphers, but the centre of a group of varied characters, each possessing marked distinctive features, and exercising an agency either for good or evil. And it is remarkable with what intelligence and energy the several actors fulfil their purposes. Mr. Phelps sustains the character of Lear. It is a work of no common difficulty to convey a notion of the mental and physical decrepitude of a man fourscore years old and upwards, the wreck of mind and body, the final energies of nature on the brink of the grave. The full manly voice will make itself audible through the childish treble, the heavy masculine tread is heard disturbing the illusion of tottering infirmity. In Mr. Phelps's performance, however, this illusion is supported with fine artistic power; and the actor is successful in impressing the poetic spirit of the character upon his audience. The majesty, as well as the paternal tenderness of Lear is preserved throughout; the grief, despair, and madness are kingly; and the business which the action inspires is heightened by the consciousness of the greatness of the mind that is suffering. At the close of the first act there is a difference between this performance and the adaptation at the Princess's. The text being closely adhered to, we observe that restlessness and mental disturbance of Lear which is so finely marked by Shakespeare, and forms a natural picture to the tragic scenes which follow. In the great scene that closes the second act, the acting of Mr. Phelps is magnificent, and the following passage in particular is rendered appalling by the imagination and power of the actor—

‘—No, you unnatural hags!

I will have such revenges on you both

That all the world shall—I will do such things—

What they are yet I know not; but they shall be

The terrors of the earth!’

“Another great feature of this impersonation is the scene where Lear, his mind become a blank, enters ‘fantastically dressed up with flowers’: the quick, sharp wit, without a directing intelligence, is touchingly and beautifully expressed. Altogether, Mr. Phelps's Lear must be pronounced a very masterly performance. The Fool, labouring to outjest Lear's ‘heart-struck injuries,’ is performed by Mr. Scharf, who seems to have a clear conception of the nature and importance of the part, and deserves to be commended for his careful and characteristic impersonation. The scenery and stage appointments are well conceived, and all in admirable keeping.”

“The principal ‘part,’ technically speaking, in this great tragedy,” says the critic of the *Observer*. “is the old King—indeed, his woes and his madness are the drama—all the rest being subsidiary and supplementary to the portraiture of the one and the development of the other. Therefore the actor who assumes to represent it assumes all the weight and all the responsibilities of the piece. It is a character at once simple and difficult of impersonation to the very last degree—

simple because it is the direct expression of passion and feeling, difficult because it is so perfectly human, human in its sympathies and in its antipathies, human in its selfishness, in its kindliness, in its obstinacy, in its yieldingness—human, in short, in its constitution, its purpose, its aim, and its end. A spoiled old man, self-willed but generous, with the rigidity of age upon the unrestrained indulgences of youth—Lear presents points of unison with almost every condition of our common nature, and provokes a sympathetic sentiment in the minds of all. It is this universality of the character which at once constitutes its simplicity and its difficulty, and renders it a triumph of histrionic art to present it properly to an intelligent audience. It is because of their intellectual deficiency in looking at it in its manifold aspects, and seizing the multifarious forms in which it is manifested, that so incalculable a number of actors have failed in its impersonation, and so few have succeeded. In general Lear is represented only under one, or at most two mental aspects; the one being age in a state of second childishness, the other absolute and hopeless insanity; and, to represent either, requires no extraordinary power on the part of the actor. But Lear is not in his dotage according to the poet's intention, as all those 'who run may read,' nor is his madness anything worse than the morbid presence of one painful idea, which haunts him like a demon and never leaves him—monomania as it is termed by men who affect to write upon the subject of that medical opprobrium—human insanity. An intellect of the highest order—one only a degree inferior to that of the creator of the part—would, these premises admitted, be required appropriately to incarnate the poet's idea of the miserable old man of the play; and, sooth to say, those actors who have best succeeded in it were uniformly men of undoubted genius—such as are in connection with the arts once, it may be, in each century. To predicate, therefore, that Mr. Phelps, who at this house, and on these occasions, undertakes the impersonation of the character, comes up to that mark, would be to do him more and the author less than justice. But this must be said of his performance of Lear, and it can be said with strict truth—it is characterized by that which must always be the basis of every excellence in connection with the presentation of Shakespeare's characters, and wanting which no actor can hope to succeed in conveying an idea of the poet's meaning—namely, veneration and good faith; and, moreover, it must be also added, that if it is never above a certain level in histrionic art, it is never below something better than mediocrity, and is in no case unworthy of a loyal interpreter and an honest audience. Setting aside those great names in dramatic art who have received illustration and celebrity from their impersonation of this 'part,' from Burbage, who was its first traditional representative, to Edmund Kean, who was its latest, Mr. Phelps's Lear will bear comparison with the best by any other actor that has ever trod the English stage. The scenery, decoration, and stage appointments were on a liberal scale, and the whole performance was entitled to the utmost praise for intelligence of appreciation on the part of the actors, fidelity

to the cause of the highest forms of dramatic art, and a complete development of all the phases of action, passion, and feeling in this most noble of all Shakespeare's tragedies."

On The Winter's Tale the *Athenæum* said:—

"Last Monday we visited this theatre, and found it crowded to an excess, the play being Shakespeare's Winter's Tale, which has been here produced with such attention to the general *mise en scène*, and to the particular study of every part, as to make the performance, indeed, a perfect treat. Mrs. Warner was Hermione, and in the statue scene looked passing beautiful; Mr. Phelps, Leontes, exhibited many touches of natural passion which told well on the house. Mr. Younge performed the part of Autolycus with great care and effect. The Winter's Tale, though a highly poetical, is not generally a popular play; but, singularly enough, the usual theatrical order of things is often reversed on this stage. The most poetical have uniformly been the most successful pieces—those that tell best in the closet have also told best in performance; such is the advantage of small theatres. We must not conclude without stating that nearly every word of the original text is repeated, and that the second scene of the fifth act, so long wont to be mutilated, is restored—a merit this, deserving unqualified commendation."

The *Observer*, after a very long and able article on this production, said:—

"Much has been written on this subject of The Winter's Tale, and yet the subject remains unexhausted. A curious critic—Horace Walpole—refers it to the historical category of the author's works; and there is much difference of opinion as to whether it was not intended as typical, and complimentary to Queen Elizabeth, her ferocious sire, and sinful mother. The weight of evidence is, however, against such a supposition as that hazarded by Walpole; and it is now believed—indeed it is known—that those portions of the piece on which he based his theory are borrowed in all cases—literally copied in some—from the novels of *Pandosto*, and *Dorastus*, and *Fawnia*, on which the comedy is undoubtedly founded. The jealousy of Leontes is the main-spring of the action in The Winter's Tale, and it is a speculation at once curious and useful to study the mode in which Shakespeare dealt with the different manifestations of the passion in this and in the tragedy of Othello. Coleridge has 'hit the nail on the head' in his analysis of this motive power acting on two dissimilar natures, by pointing out with obvious truth and inimitable acumen, that Leontes is constitutionally 'suspicious'—one who hath *tremor cordis* on him when Hermione shakes hands with Polixenes—whereas Othello is of a contrary disposition—

'One not easily jealous, but being wrought,
Perplex'd in the extreme.'

The view evolved by that great critic was obviously the one adopted

by Mr. Phelps in his intelligent and skilful impersonation of the hate-haunted monarch, and the mark of truth was on it, therefore, from the beginning to the end. ‘Jealousy,’ in the words of him who wrote the poem of Love, and perished through the most sordid of personal indulgences—opium-eating—‘jealousy,’ well remarks Coleridge, ‘is a vice of the mind, a culpable tendency of the temper, having certain well-known and well-defined effects and concomitants, all of which are visible in Leontes, and not one of which marks its presence in Othello.’ Making this axiom the basis of his idea of the character, the actor in question, in the person of the King, exhibits first, ‘an excitability on the most inadequate causes, and an eagerness to snatch at proofs;’ secondly, ‘a grossness of conception, and a disposition to degrade the object of his passion by sensual fancies and images;’ thirdly, ‘a sense of shame of his own feelings;’ fourthly, ‘a dread of vulgar ridicule;’ and fifthly, ‘a spirit of selfish vindictiveness.’ That it was the intention of the poet in creating the character to prefigure a man of a less noble nature than the ‘Moor of Venice,’ is apparent in every trait by which its ideality is depicted; and that Coleridge was essentially and particularly right in his criticism may not be disputed. But the error of actors—who, for the most part, are but half-informed men in matters of literature—has hitherto been the consecration of Othello’s idiosyncrasy into an Eidolon for their popular worship—perhaps because it is of all Shakespeare’s characters the most popular, and the consequent assumption of Othello’s jealousy as the prototype of all mental and physical expressions of that fell passion. To conceive and express the part in an opposite manner—to offer Leontes as one exhibiting ‘his sense of shame for his own feelings in a solitary moodiness of humour,’ but withal, from the violence of his emotion, ‘catching occasions to ease his mind by ambiguities, by equivoques, and by soliloquy;’ and finally, as a man acting less from ‘a high sense of honour, or a mistaken sense of duty,’ than from ‘a dread of vulgar ridicule,’—would be to embody perfection in the presentation of this character to an audience; and, sooth to say, no actor except Mr. Phelps has hitherto attempted it. That he has *all*-succeeded, and offered such an incarnation of the moody King, is not, therefore, predicated; because to comply with these conditions is clearly beyond his scope as an histrionic artist. But it may be safely said that, up to this moment, he has no equal in the part, not only at the present period, but in the past history of the English drama, so far as it has been handed down to posterity.”

1846—1847.

The third season commenced on the 25th July, 1846, and then and thenceforward the theatre was under his sole management. He opened with the First Part of Shakespeare’s Henry IV., playing for the first time the character of Sir John Falstaff,

in which he was very successful; and it was ever after one of his most famous parts. He must have played it during his lifetime three or four hundred times.* From what we have read of Henderson, Phelps must have been his real successor in this character, no one, between them or contemporary with him, having played the character in such a highly intellectual manner.

Some critics, while highly extolling it, have spoken of its want of what they have been pleased to call unction, but to us he seemed to be anything but dry; and if any one word more than another characterized his acting of the part, that word is "unctuosity."

Mr. Creswick was the Hotspur, making his first appearance before a London audience on this occasion. He was very successful, and well spoken of by the critics. G. Bennett played the King; Marston, the Prince of Wales; and Hoskins (his first appearance at this theatre), Poins; Scharf, the little part of Francis; and Mrs. H. Marston, Mrs. Quickly.

On the 29th *The Hunchback* was played, with Creswick as Master Walter; Marston, Sir Thomas Clifford; Hoskins, Modus; Scharf, Fathom; Mrs. Pollock† (an experienced actress, though her first appearance here), Julia; and Miss Cooper, Helen.

Thursday, 30th, *Julius Cæsar* was put on, Phelps appearing as Brutus; Creswick, Cassius; Marston, Marc Antony; A. Younge, Casca; and Mrs. Brougham, Portia.

On 13th August *Love's Sacrifice* (Lovell's) was enacted, with Creswick as Mathew Aylmer; G. Bennett, Paul Lafont; Hoskins, Eugène de Lorme; Marston, St. Lo; and Miss Cooper, Margaret Aylmer.

On 26th August Westland Marston's play of *The Patrician's Daughter* was produced for the first time here, Phelps playing Mordaunt; G. Bennett, the Earl of Lynterne; and Miss Laura Addison, from Edinburgh, making her first appearance in London as Lady Mabel, originally played by Helen Faucit.

* I have seen every other Falstaff of my time, including Bartley, Strickland, and the American actor Hackett, but none of them, in my opinion, approached him, I am almost tempted to say, within miles, either in the breadth of outline or filling up of this wonderful creation.—W. M. P.

† Mrs. Pollock's first husband was Mr. Ryder of Aberdeen, the famous Rob Roy of his time, and father of "Tom Ryder," whom Mr. Phelps thought matchless as a low comedian.—J. F. R.

Miss Addison's *début* was a great success, and many preferred her in this character to her predecessor. She was not such a finished actress as Miss Faucit, but she touched the hearts of her audience in many a scene with a success the most marvellous.

On 2nd September *The Lady of Lyons* was produced, for Miss Addison to appear as Pauline, Phelps of course playing Claude, and Mrs. H. Marston, Madame Deschapelles. Miss Addison's success as Pauline was as great as in *Lady Mabel*, and many preferred her to Helen Faucit.

On 16th September he produced for the first time *Romeo and Juliet* with the original text (not the hashed play that had hitherto been done). He played Mercutio (first time in London); Creswick, Romeo; G. Bennett, Friar Laurence; Miss Addison, Juliet; and Mrs. H. Marston, the Nurse, the best after Mrs. Glover's.

On 15th October *The Stranger* was again done for Miss Addison's Mrs. Haller. On 26th October *The Gamester*: Beverly, Mr. Phelps; Mrs. Beverly, Miss Addison. On 29th *Isabella* for Miss Addison, Marston being Biron, and G. Bennett, Don Carlos.

On 4th November he produced for the first time Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*, he playing the Duke; G. Bennett, Angelo; Marston, Claudio; Hoskins, Lucio (the character that made his reputation, in which and other eccentric parts he was without a rival as long as he stayed at this theatre); Miss Addison, *Isabella*.

Mr. Phelps would have preferred to play Angelo, but was afraid to intrust the Duke to Bennett. Miss Addison's *Isabella* was a fine performance, and to us it was her finest character.

On 19th November he again produced *The Merchant of Venice*, and acted Shylock, with Miss Addison as Portia; Marston was Bassanio; G. Bennett, Antonio; and Hoskins, Gratiano; Miss Cooper, Nerissa; and Scharf, Launcelot Gobbo. This cast of the piece has never been surpassed in our time, and splendidly it went with the audience.

On the 23rd he did *Venice Preserved* for Miss Addison's Belvidera, Creswick playing Pierre, and Marston, Jaffier.

On the 30th of the same month *Money* was again acted, with Miss Addison as Clara Douglas, a very sweet performance.

On 4th December Damon and Pythias was produced, Phelps playing Damon; Creswick, Pythias; Dionysius, G. Bennett. Damon had been, in the provinces, one of Mr. Phelps's most popular parts, and it was not to be wondered at, for it was a magnificent piece of acting, and, like his Lucius Junius Brutus, once seen, never to be forgotten. It had been described as a great character of Macready's in his younger days, but if he approached Mr. Phelps in it, he must have been an altogether different actor then to what he was when said to be in the zenith of his fame.

On 17th December Talfourd's Ion was acted for Creswick's benefit. Phelps played Adrastus (always a very great performance); Creswick himself, Ion. On Boxing Night The Stranger was acted.

On 29th Isabella was again acted; then followed The Merchant of Venice, Lady of Lyons, and Money, until 13th January, 1847, when he produced Beaumont and Fletcher's play of A King and No King, which had not been acted for a century or more, and in which he made a tremendous hit in the character of Arbaces (King of Iberia). George Bennett played Bessus (also a great piece of acting); and Marston, Tigranes (King of Armenia); Miss Addison, Panthea, a not very agreeable character, but she did all that could be done with it. The play was very successful, and the critics one and all spoke very highly of it. The following criticism on it, by F. G. Tomlins, appeared in *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper*:—

SADLER'S WELLS.

“On Wednesday evening the long-announced revival of Beaumont and Fletcher's play of A King and No King took place, with that vigilant and picturesque care, by a due observance of which Mr. Phelps has placed himself and this small theatre on an equality with the most celebrated of his competitors. The scenery and dresses were in excellent keeping, illustrating and not overpowering the performance. It must, however, be admitted that there is an air of great exaggeration, not only in the writing but in the adjuncts of the play; and that the Eastern dresses suffer somewhat in our estimation, from the frequency and length of time that they have been adopted in burlesque. The play itself has always been considered, by the admirers of the twin writers, as one of their best. For our own part, though acknowledging the dramatic power of some of the scenes,

particularly those developing the passion of Arbaces, we cannot but think it very inferior to those of many of their contemporaries. Beaumont and Fletcher were undoubtedly amateur writers, and strange as such a term may appear when applied to poets, it is still pertinent to the examination of their quality. They had as much of sentimentality as the healthiness and vigour of their age would permit. They were not so much dramatists, as lovers and admirers of the dramatic art, devoting themselves to that form of composition as the most fashionable of their time. They indeed first perverted the drama, making it a vehicle for the promulgation of their own sentiments and bursts of heroic or lyric imaginings. These assertions may appear very heterodox to many who have blindly followed the cry raised for the old drama, and who consider it as all of one quality. The new and the old drama cannot differ more widely than the styles and principles of some of the old dramatists. Ben Jonson, Fletcher, Massinger, and Shakespeare are respectively at the head of four distinct species of plays. Of the four we think Fletcher the least of the true dramatists. He is the literary precursor of Dryden and Lee, and forestalled in many particulars the heroic plays of Charles II.'s time. We could not but be sensibly struck by this in last night's performance. The same courtly reverence for kings; the same tampering with forbidden subjects; the same excess and heat of passion. Vehement but not potent; exaggerated and fantastic, but still not full and satisfying. The hyperbolic bursts betray a purer taste than the writers of the later period, and the excess is tempered with that feeling for the true and truly good which Shakespeare and the other genuine poets had made an absolute requisite. It had been the worse for Fletcher had he been born fifty years later. His excess would then have been totally unrestrained, and the vehemence of his fancy (for we have some misgivings as to his imagination) would have led him into follies that would have made him the hero of Buckingham's Rehearsal. But when we consider the structure of his innumerable plays; the abundance and power of his genius; and, if animated by too much heat, the still high and mounting daring of its flight, breaking through its extravagance into torrents of eloquence and passion; we regret even to appear to detract from the admiration due to so noble and refulgent a spirit. His deficiencies as a dramatist are all we would allude to.

“The chief personage, Arbaces, is, if not quite a strong character, yet so strongly portrayed in one or two characteristics, that he is a fit axis of the play. His wilfulness of conduct creates perpetual alternations of interest, and is vigorously, if not very delicately delineated. His good disposition, contending with his impetuous impulses, opens the way for those bursts in which the author's power rested. This part was admirably, and in two scenes exquisitely, performed by Mr. Phelps. He was wanting, we thought, in kingly dignity and self-assurance, in the early scenes betraying the capriciousness of his facile nature to the courtiers; but in the scenes where he discovers his unlawful passion for his

supposed sister ; in that which he endeavours to gain over his worthy minister and friend to his ignoble desires ; and in that where he learns the secret of his substitution for the real monarch, he was surpassingly true and powerful. It is a greater and higher performance not only than any we have ever seen of Mr. Phelps's, but of any actor since *the* Kean. Without apparent effort, without stage artifice, it is a pure and powerful delineation of rapid and consuming passion, and places the enactor in the highest rank of his art. A few more such delineations, and Mr. Phelps may bring back the passionate and serious drama to the heart of the metropolis.

"The rest of the performance was careful. Miss Addison looked and performed the slight and imperfect character of Panthea in a classical style,—we did not perceive her wonted energy nor feeling. Bessus was performed by Mr. Bennett to the top of its exaggeration, and, with the other comic parts, was felt to be rather the vagary of a humorous fancy than the delineation of any human reality. Some scenes seemed to descend even below farce to pantomime.

"Considerable alteration has been made in the play, and we cannot think judiciously. Omissions were allowable, but interpolations of sentiment not in accordance with the purpose of the play are unendurable. And the only impatience manifested by the audience was directed towards them, of course unconsciously though instinctively. Whoever has penned them has not 'plucked out the heart of the mystery' of the elder drama. The house was crowded to the very utmost possibility ; on all accounts a gratifying spectacle."

The *Lady of Lyons*, *Money*, and *A King and No King* then went on night after night, with *The Rivals*, and *The Road to Ruin* (in which latter Phelps's *Old Dornton*, and Mrs. Marston's *Widow Warren*, Miss Cooper's *Sophia*, and Hoskins's *Goldfinch* were very fine performances).

On the 18th February a new and original tragedy, by the Rev. James White, author of *The King of the Commons* (produced in May 1846 at the Princess's by Mr. Macready), called *Feudal Times*, was brought out with very great success. Phelps played the hero, Walter Cochrane (Earl of Mar) ; Bennett, Douglas (Earl of Angus) ; Marston, King James III. of Scotland ; Miss Addison, Margaret Randolph ; and Miss Cooper, the Queen. This piece was very successful, the whole of the five characters above-named having been very finely acted.

On 22nd March he again produced *Othello*, with Miss Addison as *Desdemona*, and other characters as before.

On 7th April he produced for the first time Shakespeare's *Tempest*, he playing *Prospero* ; Marston, *Ferdinand* ; G. Bennett,

Caliban; Scharf, Trinculo; and A. Younge, Stephano; Miss Addison was Miranda, and Miss Julia St. George, Ariel,—a fine cast, and the piece was very successful.

On 7th May he produced Morton's comedy, *Town and Country*, playing himself Reuben Glenroy; Marston, Captain Glenroy; G. Bennett, Rev. Owen Glenroy; Hoskins, Plastic; A. Younge, Cosey; Williams, Trot; Miss Cooper, Hon. Mrs. Glenroy; Miss Addison, Rosalie Summers; and Mrs. H. Marston, Mrs. Moreen,—also a splendid cast, and fine acting throughout.

On Whit Monday Maturin's tragedy of *Bertram* was acted. He played *Bertram*, and in some parts of it was very fine; but it was not a piece to draw much money.

On the 2nd June, the last night of the season, he produced for his own benefit Lovell's fine play of *The Provost of Bruges*, in which he acted the character of the Provost.

Thirty-one first pieces were played this season, which consisted of several of Shakespeare's, as has been seen, interspersed by new plays, as well as others of the Elizabethan poets which had not been acted for over a century; and *Macbeth* pure and simple, as it came from Shakespeare's pen, was announced for production in the following September. The theatre was open two hundred and fifty-two nights.

On the opening of the theatre this third season, and now under his sole management (Mrs. Warner, for reasons unnecessary to be gone into here, having seceded from the theatre), F. G. Tomlins (editor) says in *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper* of Saturday, 1st August, as follows:—

“The opening of this theatre with one of Shakespeare's plays, requiring a greater variety and contrast of talent than any other, naturally suggests reflections as to the cause of what may be justly termed a phenomenon in the dramatic world. It involves not only the consideration of the theatrical, but of social matters, and may be cited not merely as an instance of the power of genius to attract under the most adverse circumstances, but as an illustration of the false notions promulgated of the capacities and tastes of various sections of society.

“When Shakespeare was fashionable at the Court end of the town, the higher classes arrogated to themselves finer tastes and perceptions than their more eastern neighbours. The passion, the poetry, and the wisdom of the great writer were said to be inappreciable by the vulgar multitude out of Westminster; and it was declared in the Houses of

Commons and Lords by our hereditary legislators, that if Shakespeare's plays were permitted to be played out of the Court precincts, he would be desecrated ; that the enunciation would be so vile, and the representation so mean, that it would be a national disgrace. A few (and at first but a very few) men could not think that the substitution of his grand illustrations of human nature for the insane trash usually bestowed on the suburbs, could do any injury either to the dramatist or the audience.

" With much opposition the free trade of the drama was established, and if any one desires to have a practical illustration of the beneficial results of liberal doctrines, he cannot have a more efficient or pleasant one than by witnessing the performances of Sadler's Wells. Never was the exemplification of the force of excellence more apparent ; without even a change of the name, with which for so many years was associated dancing dogs, and real water, this theatre, by the mere force of fine taste and ability, has become the resort of the intellectual, and the home of the poetical and passionate drama. It speaks strongly for the neighbourhood, and more strongly for the fine perceptions that are smouldering in the nature of all human beings, that Mr. Phelps's and Mrs. Warner's noble attempt has met with due encouragement.

" A more forlorn speculation could not be imagined than it was declared to be by all the Jeremiahs of the theatrical world when the idea was first promulgated ; and it argues so sensible a perception of the force of excellence, and such a reliance on the potency of our great poet, that it carries the projectors into the highest class of artists. A faith so fervid, and a taste so pure for the highest and profoundest kind of drama, are something very different from, and must not be confounded with, the showman's mode, that seeks to dazzle with costly furniture, or captivate the senses with glaring pageants and startling contrivances.

" It is now nearly one hundred years since the monotony of courtly theatricals was roused from its apathy, and kindled into enthusiasm by the bursting forth of a new and natural style of acting at an illegal theatre ; and the then gilded chariots of fashion were seen passing the Rubicon of Temple Bar, and proceeding even beyond the money-lenders of Lombard Street, to the vulgar precincts of Wapping, to see Garrick at Goodman's Fields. Sadler's Wells was then a wine-house and half menagerie, and the law, in its plenitude of power and dearth of wisdom, declared that Shakespeare's drama should never be played at such places. Slow was the growth of liberality and enlightenment, and it took almost a century to procure for this despised suburb the right to represent the national poet, who in the great tenderness of legislators was to be swathed with Acts of Parliament, and only exhibited under royal patronage.

" It were to write a history of the nation to show how, through the humanizing influence of a Fielding and a Defoe, and their noble successors, the inhabitants of Goswell Street and Islington have been

refined to a purer taste and higher perceptions than the neighbourhood of St. James's. There are shop-girls whose genuine enjoyment of the fine dramas produced here should put to shame the corrupted taste of some even of the very highest ladies in the land.

"Mr. Phelps has a just cause for self-gratulation for the aid he has given to this development, and it is heartily to be hoped he has reaped a mercantile reward for it. The opening of the present season on Saturday last was a worthy climax to his previous efforts. It was a satisfactory refutation to many dogmas lately indulged in with regard to the state of the drama. It proved that a play of Shakespeare's could still be well and completely represented; and more, that an audience could be gathered together who could still earnestly appreciate and rapturously enjoy his works and creations.

"Of all plays, the First Part of Henry IV. would be cited as embodying more than any other all the great qualities of Shakespeare. Others, such as Hamlet, Lear, and Macbeth, would be placed before it, each for some transcendent excellence, but in no other play will all the varied qualities of the author be so fully displayed at one view; and it seems to us, it may be cited as an epitome of all his vast powers. Wit, humour, pathos, wisdom, chivalry, and even the spiritual abound in it with such potency, that each character requires an actor of eminence to portray it. We do not mean to say that it received this illustration on Saturday night, or indeed ever at any one time, but it received a very satisfactory, not to say noble, exposition. Mr. Phelps's Falstaff and Mr. Creswick's Hotspur had great merit, the former showing a full intellectual appreciation of the intense humour of the part, and the latter catching the fiery poetry of the character in portions of his delineation. Mr. Phelps possesses *the one* quality which supplies the place of so many other advantages. That which gave height to Garrick, lustre and animation to the disadvantageous appearance of Henderson, dignity and grandeur to Edmund Kean, and which has enabled so many actors to distinguish themselves, though seemingly denied by nature the grace and presence apparently indispensable to the art of acting—that precious quality is imagination, which seizes at once and fully on the author's idea, and develops it with a suggestive power that is kindling and contagious. ✓

"The illusion raised by this power at once obliterates all the defects which are insurmountable to those who treat acting as the art of mimicking, or, to speak more correctly, who seek by the reproduction of the real to substitute a fact for an idea. The real school has been carried to its height by some late celebrated actors, but its laborious efforts to produce illusion deceive only for an instant, whereas the vivifying force of a fine imagination puts the spectator's mind into full action, and leads him from scene to scene, and from passion to passion, by a spell not easily to be dissolved.

"This power Mr. Phelps has, and it is not only apparent in his acting, but in his management. Grace and propriety are manifest in the whole business of the scene, and those who have not a suggestive

faculty, have the benefit of his direction and guidance. The play is, therefore, brought forward as a whole, and is more fully developed at Sadler's Wells than was even formerly the case at Drury Lane, though informed in one character by the transcending abilities of *the Kean*."

1847—1848.

The fourth season commenced on 23rd August, 1847, with Shakespeare's *Cymbeline*. Phelps played Leonatus Posthumus; G. Bennett, Belarius; Marston, Iachimo; H. Mellon, *Cymbeline*; Hoskins, Guiderius; Miss Laura Addison, Imogen; and Mrs. Marston, the Queen. This production was especially successful, and brought him a great many very flattering letters, amongst them one from Charles Dickens, and another from John Forster, the then editor of the *Examiner*, both of which will appear further on.

On the 30th of the same month he continued Lovell's tragedy of *The Provost of Bruges*, which he produced for his benefit the previous season, playing himself Bertulphe the Provost, the character originally played by Macready. The latter, by notes in his diary, does not seem to have thought very highly of it, but Mr. Phelps, to our mind, (outside Shakespeare) made it one of his finest assumptions. G. Bennett played Thancmar, and Marston, Bouchard; Laura Addison was Constance, the Provost's daughter, which she acted very nicely.

3rd September, Werner again for a few nights; 16th, *Patrician's Daughter*; and those plays, with *Cymbeline*, were played until 27th September, when he produced *Macbeth* from the original text, dispensing with the Singing Witches. He played *Macbeth*; Marston, *Macduff*; G. Bennett, *Banquo*; J. T. Johnson, *Malcolm*; Hoskins, *Rosse*; Graham, *Lennox*; Miss Addison, *Lady Macbeth*; Miss Cooper, *Lady Macduff*; Harrington, *Hecate*; the three Witches, A. Younge, *Scharf*, and Wilkins. This was the first time the tragedy had been thus produced for two hundred years, and it was immensely successful.

F. G. Tomlins (editor), in *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper*, and Jonas Levy, in *Lloyd's Weekly London News*, wrote of it as follows:—

“The production of *Macbeth* at Sadler’s Wells on Monday, shorn of the meretricious additions and adornments that the puerile fancy of Davenant and successive managers had encumbered it with, is a new proof of the soundness of that criticism which has been so long demanding for Shakespeare an unfettered use of his own genius. A great artist (and a great dramatist must be the greatest of artists) casts his productions as a whole; and the production of *Macbeth*, or any really grand tragedy, can no more be tampered with by inferior artists than St. Peter’s at Rome, or our St. Paul’s, by a modern builder. The unity of purpose in *Macbeth* had so far satisfied the newer school that this tragedy had not suffered in so outrageous a manner as *Lear* and others. Still, however, the French lust for sensation and effect, introduced by the exiled courtiers at Charles’s restoration, and the effect of which is still visible in our drama and literature, induced Davenant to introduce a crowd of singers; and, in fact, made it a vehicle for show and music. Of all the attempts to restore Shakespeare’s plays we consider this the boldest. Precisely because it had been so little altered, in comparison to others, was it difficult to restore it. Connected also with noble music, which in a well-conceived opera would be most appropriate, many persons still think it was an allowable innovation. All such thinkers we refer to the reproduction at this theatre, for a better commentary on the purport of the great drama could not be obtained. For the first time for nearly two hundred years could a correct view be obtained by an audience of the play in its entirety; and never did its proportions come out more perfectly. By inserting only the portion of the Witches designed by the author, their agency and their potency became obvious; and it was wonderful to find with how few touches and comparatively few words their important offices are fulfilled. Four short scenes, in curt dialogue, divided between three and sometimes four individuals, make up the whole of this terrible machinery. But never was the supernatural more effectively introduced. These wretched outcasts, a link, by their innate baseness, between humanity and the powers of darkness, hover over the action of the drama like a pestiferous vapour, assuming a tangible form on every vital occasion, being again dissipated into the murky atmosphere under which, as under a canopy, the appalling incidents of the action proceed. They appear but to stimulate the criminal to fresh crimes, and rejoice at the fulfilment of the horrors they have induced. The first scene is a key-note to the sublime series of scenes that is to follow; and admirably managed and most poetically conceived is it in this restoration. On the rising of the curtain the darkened stage presents three wretched, sordid, outcast creatures, whose own vile nature and as vile treatment have made a concentration of malice and misanthropy; and, completely subverted in nature, with them the fair is foul, and all that is loathsome, delightful. Having prepared in their villainous assignation the minds of the audience for the temptation, they literally (by a mechanical contrivance) vanish in the fog and filthy air. In the temptation scene they are brief

malevolent, and equivocal; and here again, by well-conceived arrangements, they appeared dimly and indistinctly, and by other mechanical contrivances receded into the very air, again appearing in a pestiferous-looking cloud, huddled together, and 'hovering' in the air. They have now sown the evil seed, and we see them no more until a brief scene at the close of the third act, merely introduced to elevate the catastrophe in which Hecate alone indicates the course to be taken to rouse so important a sinner to 'spurn his fate,' 'scorn death,' and finally blaspheme 'wisdom and grace.' In the fourth and last scene of their appearance (the incantation scene), the grovelling filth and baseness of their nature are displayed, and subtle and tortuous devices and utterances finally pamper the lost man's spirit, and 'by the strength of their illusion' draw him on to a monstrous and utterly remorseless course. Such are the Witches in the original play, and in this restoration,—brief in discourse, and but seldom introduced, but so effectively that we feel their noxious influence in every utterance. The Davenant additions only overlay the interest, stop the progress of the action, and, confusing the attention, destroy the whole perspective and proportion of the drama. The modern restoration presents also a simpler and juster view of the character of the Witches, which have been, we must think, much misinterpreted and misrepresented by most of the critical commentators, not even excluding the greatest of all, Coleridge. We have dwelt more at length on this portion of the play because it was there that the difficulty of restoration lay.

"The restoration of the part of Lady Macduff, and several other intermediate scenes, all written with a view of softening the horror of the theme, or bringing the great moral more effectively out, shows how complete an artist Shakespeare was, comprehending the laws that produce effect, and equally possessing the poetic element that must animate a drama. Mr. Phelps's performance was conceived in the highest poetry,—with no 'false starts,' no spouting, no pointed ranting, no misdirected energy that fires the unreflecting many into sudden admiration. It was all deep, genuine, well-uttered passion and emotion, from the first agitated 'Stay, you imperfect speakers,' to the frantic courage of 'Yet, I will try the last.' The fearful intermediate emotions were as 'a wild and violent sea' with their colossal passion and awe-striking succession, almost too much to see, and certainly almost too arduous to perform. Mr. Phelps has the one great requisite for acting: he possesses a plastic imagination, and, like Henderson, who in some physical defects he also resembles, he seems to put on the character with the dress. Certainly we have never seen the character so completely portrayed; the key-note being struck gently at the first, the harmony was preserved throughout. Some particular scenes other actors might give more grace or force to, but as an entire conception of the valiant chieftain, drawn into the darkest crimes by the solicitations of the ministers of evil, we have never seen it rivalled. The great moral of the play was thus absolutely protruded on the mind, and as crime succeeded crime, until the catalogue is

exhausted, and their utter inutility is displayed, the mind was shaken with terror at the fury of the passions and their 'fatal dismal end.'

"Of the other characters we need not say much. 'The play was the thing,' and there was nothing so bad as materially to interfere with the general effect. The Witches were well depicted and attired; very properly, scarcely grotesque, but squalid, and unearthly, and picturesque. Banquo and Macduff (Mr. Bennett and Mr. Marston) were sensibly, and the last effectively, performed. Lady Macbeth is so awful a part, hallowed by such traditional notions of excellence, and requiring so much natural dignity, that it was not to be expected so young and inexperienced an actress as Miss Addison could perform it. She would do better if she made less effort, and did not by continual emphasis mar the effect of her own energy. The accenting almost every alternate syllable produces a monotony, almost amounting to sing-song, that prevents all expression of emotion. In the more literal parts she was the most effective; and we still have every hope that this young lady will make a fine actress. But she must labour unceasingly in her art, and should seek the highest advice. The appointments of the play were good in their kind, and the arrangement of the banquet scene novel and effective. The introducing the head of Macbeth was, however, a mistaken literality. The house was crowded to excess by a most attentive and delighted audience."

"The decline of the English drama—the degradation of the English stage—has of late been a cry, which has been repeated and re-echoed till it has become a sort of cant—a form of words which people have got into the habit of using, without any distinct notion of its meaning. The stage is pretty much in the same predicament as the currency—subject to fluctuations that cannot be traced with precision to their causes, but for which everybody imagines *he* has discovered the true remedy. It will be found in the one case as well as in the other, that the influences which stimulate or depress are so mixed and uncertain, and so exposed to modification from circumstances, as to evade the application of any general principles, except those which are fundamental and unalterable. At all events, any one who sees what is now going on at Sadler's Wells Theatre—any one in particular who mingled in the dense crowd assembled on Monday night on the representation of Macbeth, and who had the good fortune to obtain admission, and witness its enthusiastic reception, must be convinced that there is small reason, or rather no reason at all, for the complaint that has been proclaimed aloud of the degenerate state of the British drama, and the degraded position of the English stage. Macbeth was written in 1606, and, perhaps, has undergone less alteration than any of Shakespeare's other plays. In 1674, Sir William Davenant produced a version of Macbeth, introducing the dancing and singing witches, and the music of Locke. This has kept possession of the stage till the present time, when Mr. Phelps boldly steps forward and restores the play, as near as circumstances allow, to its pristine form. He

has brought it out with a profusion of magnificence, and a propriety of decoration and pomp, which one could scarcely imagine the resources of the theatre to be capable of. The first scene was very skilfully managed, and elicited a round of well-deserved applause. The stage was darkened to a much greater degree than usual, so much so that but the imperfect outlines of the weird sisters were visible. In front only a dim lurid light played, and as the hags stepped backwards, the darkness, aided by a combination of gauze screens, procured one of the most perfect effects of vanishing we ever saw. The gradual clearing of the air too, after Macbeth's interview with the sisters, disclosing the lines of the victorious army in the distance, was well conceived and cleverly executed. It seemed the natural brightening up of nature relieved of the presence of the foul sorcerers. Macbeth's castle at Inverness was another effective scene, but we mention it principally as being the first attempt we have seen to reproduce some of the local features of the 'pleasant site'—the steep wall-crowned hill, and the clear river rushing beneath. The alarm scene of the murder was admirable. Nobles, knights, squires, pages, and vassals, armed with every species of ancient weapons picked up on the spur of the moment—here a halberd, there a battle-axe, now a pike, anon a blazing pine torch, rushed tumultuously upon the stage, as from every portion of a huge and garrisoned castle. The cauldron scene, too, was effective. The final scenes were spirited in the extreme. The old conventional business of a general action—a flourish of trumpets every two or three minutes, with a single combat between, was very properly dispensed with. If ever a *mêlée* was well imitated upon the stage, it was in the representation of this tragedy. Looking through heavy Gothic balustrades, you saw the crowds of combatants. A sally of the defenders of the castle now driving out their besiegers; anon a fierce rally of the English soldiers beating back the troops of Macbeth; while forth from the *mêlée*, with difficulty disentangling themselves from the fighting, rushing crowd—now Macbeth, now Macduff, now Siward, would struggle forward for a more conspicuous place. Macbeth's head is also introduced on a pole, as directed by Shakespeare. He is not killed by Macduff in the sight of the audience, as heretofore on the representation of the play. We have heard many objections to bringing on 'the tyrant's head'; but in our opinion Mr. Phelps has done well in adhering strictly to the author. We have no desire for a *regular picturesque* death; no doubt it tells with astonishing effect upon the nerves of the susceptible and delicate part of the audience; but would not such a spectacle be more appropriate in Rugantino, Timour the Tartar, or The Assassin of the Rock? The costumes were got up with taste, judgment, and splendour. There was no tartan—although the play has generally been so dressed.* Tartan is comparatively a late introduction into Scotland, and its use in representing

* Tartan, though not perhaps in the strict clan-pattern sense, as we know it, is as old as the heather, if not the hills, which it clothes and glorifies. Macbeth may, or may not, have had a touch of it in his dress.—J. F. B.

the costume of the period of Macbeth must be erroneous. The primitive-looking mantles, with their heavy bars and ponderous folds, in which most of the characters were dressed, harmonized well with our notions of the early, almost traditional period of the play. Mr. Phelps played Macbeth. On the first night he appeared over excited and exhausted in his performance. On the second representation, his delineation and conception of the character was not only just, but in some parts original and new. He throws into it much vigour and nice discrimination. His elocution is excellent, and his taste correct. His performance of the character, as a whole, was a masterly one. In the soliloquy on the visionary dagger, he gave the picture of an imagination affected with the dread design he was about to put in execution with appalling truth, and ably marked the sinking horror that benumbed his faculties after the perpetration of the horrid deed. He seemed deeply impressed with the grandeur of the poet's conception, and to feel all that he said or did. Instead of at once starting at the ideal dagger, as if he was fully convinced of its appearance, he kept his eye fixed on the 'painting of his fear,' till the brain-sick, bewildered imagination made it real; shrinking from its belief, and returning to it with a struggling conviction, until it obtained full possession of him. In the banquet scene he was not quite so successful, because dignity and kingly courtesy were wanting; but his address to the ghost of Banquo was most excellent, his attitude admirable, and his action good; his expression, too, was in perfect union with all, and the whole of the latter part of the scene presented as true a resemblance of a murderer's dismay before the shadow of his victim, as the fancy could form. His last scene was alike excellent; like the former Thane of Cawdor, 'nothing became his life more than leaving it.' He gallantly bore up against Macduff to the last, and quitted the stage accompanied by the loud applause of the audience. Mr. Marston's performance of Macduff was most meritorious; it was well studied and carefully enacted; he exhibited the touches of domestic woe, which require the feelings of the tender father and affectionate husband, very effectively. Malcolm was very well played by Mr. J. T. Johnson; as was Rosse by Mr. Hoskins, and Duncan by Mr. H. Mellon—the latter part is said to have been originally played by Shakespeare himself. Mr. Bennett's Banquo is a superior performance; and the Witches of Messrs. Younge, Scharf, and Wilkins are entitled to their full meed of praise. Mr. Harrington's Hecate is not so good an embodiment as his Pisanio; it was carelessly done, the text delivered with too much rapidity, thereby destroying the rhythm. The minor parts were sufficiently sustained. Miss Laura Addison was the Lady Macbeth. She has a good conception of the part, draws a just outline of it, but is incapable of *filling up* the difficult and tremendous character of Lady Macbeth. We have acknowledged Miss Addison to be a very talented young lady; and we admit she is a rising actress. It therefore gives us pain to depress the hopes of one so talented; but in great things, as in small, truth should be spoken; it is ultimately beneficial

to the performer herself, and is a debt of justice to other professors of the same art. Although by no means a *great* performance, there are several parts of Miss Addison's Lady Macbeth that deserve honourable mention. Her manner of reading her husband's letter on her entrance was good; and so was her delivery of the succeeding soliloquy; but when she came to 'The raven himself is hoarse,' it was immediately discovered that her want of physical energy would militate considerably against her Lady Macbeth being recorded as a first-rate specimen of the histrionic art. The reception of her new-titled husband was effective; and the swelling ambition that prompts her murderous hints to him, correctly depicted; but we fear she is acquiring a bad habit of declaiming when she should feel, and of studying to produce effect, when, if she yielded to the impulse of the moment, she would achieve her object without effort. In her first interview with Duncan, she mingled a graceful hospitable frankness with the stern looks that occasionally were darted on the king as he is about to enter the castle. The scene in which she works up Macbeth to do the deed was well conceived, but feebly executed. We must award her all praise for an excellent distinctness, and for the effectiveness of her whispering speeches during the progress of the murder, particularly where she exclaims, in a suppressed but contemptuous tone,—

‘Infirm of purpose,
Give me the daggers,’ &c.

Her best scene was the one of the banquet, where she dismisses her guests, commanding them to

‘Stand not upon the order of your going,
But go at once.’

In conclusion, we have only to remark that Miss Addison is deficient of the high and superior powers which are required to give effect to Lady Macbeth. She is a clever actress, with a very laudable intelligence of the character, but with natural powers completely inadequate to its just exhibition. Lady Macduff, in itself an unimportant part, was rendered very important by the excellence with which it was enacted by Miss Cooper. A talented little child, a Miss Mandlebert, made quite an impression in her performance of Macduff's son; it was a clever impersonation. The house was crowded in every part, and hundreds went away disappointed, not being able to obtain admission. The play was listened to with the greatest attention; its success was most triumphant. The curtain descended amid a volley of cheers,* Phelps, Marston, and Miss Addison being called for by the audience, which was an indiscriminate one, drawn from all classes of society, and representing the experiences of every condition of life. Such an audience is, upon the whole, the soundest tribunal before which the merits of an actor or a play can be tried. If it be not guided in its decisions by critical canons and fine distinctions, it is governed by the instinct of feelings that are keenly sensitive to the appeals of nature, and rarely erroneous in the final award.”

On 27th October Colman's comedy of *The Heir at Law* was performed for the first time under Mr. Phelps's management, A. Younge playing Daniel Dowlas; J. T. Johnson, Dick Dowlas; Scharf, Dr. Pangloss; and Hoskins, Zekiel Homespun; Mrs. Marston, Deborah Dowlas; and Miss Cooper, Cicely Homespun.

On the 3rd November he produced a second new play, by the Rev. James White, entitled *John Savile of Haysted*, he playing John Savile; G. Bennett, John Felton; Marston, George Villiers (Duke of Buckingham); A. Younge, Master Clayton; Laura Addison, Lilian Savile (a charming creation, and beautifully acted); Mrs. Marston, Mistress Bridget, sister to John Savile. He again would have played the part he gave Bennett if Bennett could have acted John Savile, but as it was, they were both very fine pieces of acting, and the play was very successful. On the second night the author induced him to do what no other man ever did before or since, and that was after acting to go to his house to an entertainment got up in his honour in the shape of a supper, &c., &c., at which were present, besides his host, Charles Dickens, John Forster, Douglas Jerrold, Clarkson Stanfield, the Landseers, Tom Taylor, David Roberts, and a whole host of other celebrities—indeed, a very unusual gathering of eminent men connected with the drama, literature, and the arts. Of course after supper his health was proposed, and every justice done to his three and a half years' work at Sadler's Wells.

On 24th November Colman's *Poor Gentleman* was done for the first time, with a strong cast, although neither he nor Miss Addison were in it.

On the 29th of this month he produced, for the first time also, Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, playing Jaques himself; * Marston, Orlando; Scharf, Touchstone; Rosalind, Miss Cooper; and Mrs. Marston, Audrey.† On 2nd December, after the comedy, Milman's tragedy of *Fazio* was performed for the benefit of the acting manager, Mr. Greenwood, his co-lessee. Marston played *Fazio*, and Miss Addison, Bianca. On the

* A very different conception to any other that I ever saw, and I have seen a score or more actors in this part.—W. M. P.

† All as fine performances of the four characters as I ever witnessed.—W. M. P.

10th the comedy of *The Steward* was acted for the first time, with the whole strength of the company, except himself and Miss Addison.

On 6th January, 1848, Money was again acted for some nights; on 19th *The Lady of Lyons*; and on 26th January he produced, for the first time, Shakespeare's comedy of *Twelfth Night*, playing himself *Malvolio*; Marston, the Duke; George Bennett, Sir Toby Belch; A. Younge, Sir Andrew Aguecheek; H. Mellon, Fabian; and Scharf, the Clown; Viola was acted by Laura Addison, Olivia by Miss Cooper, and Maria by Mrs. H. Marston,—a cast (even setting aside his splendid acting as *Malvolio*) beyond any other that could very well be named.

On Monday, 31st January, *Hamlet* was again performed; on 18th February Sheridan Knowles's play of *Love*; and on the 25th February, *Werner*; 2nd March, *The Bridal*; and on the 9th, for the first time, Shakespeare's *Merry Wives of Windsor*: Sir John Falstaff, Mr. Phelps; Mr. Ford, Mr. Marston; Slender, Mr. Hoskins; Shallow, A. Younge; Sir Hugh Evans, Scharf; Doctor Caius, Williams; Bardolph, Knight; Host of the Garter, H. Mellon; Pistol, Charles Fenton; and Robin, Miss Mandlebert; Miss Cooper played Mrs. Ford; Mrs. H. Marston, Mrs. Page; Miss Marston, Anne Page; and Mrs. W. Watson, Mrs. Quickly. This cast was also of undoubted excellence, and the piece was a roar from the beginning to the end, and an immense success. It was done for his benefit on the first night, and he afterwards played Don Felix in Mrs. Centlivre's comedy of *The Wonder*, Miss Addison being the Donna Violante, and Miss Cooper, Flora.

On the 27th March *King Lear* was produced, for the first time this season—cast as before; and on 12th April Westland Marston's play of *The Patrician's Daughter*, and Murphy's comedy of *The Way to Keep Him*, for the benefit of Miss Addison.

On the 13th *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and *The Poor Gentleman*, for the benefit of Mrs. Marston, brought the fourth season to a close, during which a few other plays produced in the three previous years were also again acted, with those specially chronicled as done for the first time.

1848—1849.

The fifth season commenced on 27th September, 1848. During the recess great alterations had been made in the theatre: the stage had been very much enlarged, new dressing-rooms had been built, as well as a new green-room; indeed, vast improvements had been made in the old building.

Miss Addison was no longer a member of the company, and a new actress was engaged to supply her place, then almost a novice, although she had been tutored by Michelet in Paris and Charles Kemble in London. She was prepared to try in the French capital Rachel's parts, and here those of Mrs. Siddons and Mrs. Warner. Mr. Phelps opened with Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*, he himself playing the noble Roman for the first time; G. Bennett, *Cominius*; A. Younge, *Menenius*; Marston, *Aufidius*; Miss Cooper, *Virgilia*; Mrs. Marston, *Valeria*; and Miss Glyn (the new actress), *Volumnia*. The production was a great triumph for him.* The house was crammed to suffocation, and the applause overwhelming. It was a repetition of the first night of *Macbeth* the preceding season.

On 11th October he produced Beaumont and Fletcher's play of *Rule a Wife and Have a Wife*, in which he played Leon (a splendid piece of acting); Hoskins, *Michael Perez*; Miss Huddart (a niece of Mrs. Warner's, and afterwards a contralto singer of some pretensions) being *Margaritta*, and Miss Cooper, *Estifania*. The revival was a success, and much applauded.

On 16th same month *The Winter's Tale* was again produced, with Miss Glyn as *Hermione*, and other characters as before. On 27th *Richelieu* was again acted; the only difference in the cast was that Mr. Hoskins played *De Beringhen*; Miss Cooper, *Julie*; and Miss Huddart, *François*.

On 11th November *Venice Preserved* was acted, for the purpose of introducing Mr. G. K. Dickinson in the character of *Jaffier*,

* I sat with Charles Kemble, and never shall I forget the veteran's look on several occasions, when he turned round to me after all my uncle's great scenes, and said, "*That was very fine, that was very fine.*" That from the brother of John Kemble I thought the greatest proof I could have of Mr. Phelps's excellence in this character.—W. M. P.

G. Bennett playing Pierre, and Miss Glyn, Belvidera. The gentleman was successful, and the piece went well.

On 13th Damon and Pythias was again revived, Marston this time playing Pythias.

On Friday the 17th Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing* was done for the first time. He did not play in this comedy, but it was well cast, and acted by the following :—H. Marston, Benedick (the true successor of Charles Kemble in the part); Hoskins, Don Pedro; G. K. Dickinson, Claudio; Scharf, Verges (a very fine piece of acting); Dogberry, A. Younge (equally good); and Leonato, George Bennett. Miss Cooper was charming as Beatrice, and Miss Huddart played Hero. On 20th *The Lady of Lyons* was acted, with Miss Cooper as Pauline (rather weak).

On 27th he produced, for the first time under his management, Browning's tragedy of *A Blot in the 'Scutcheon*, playing himself his original character of Thorold Lord Tresham; * G. K. Dickinson, Henry Earl of Mertoun (originally played by Anderson); and Miss Cooper, Mildred Tresham (originally played by Helen Faucit).

On 1st December Lovell's *Love's Sacrifice* was again acted, Marston this time playing Mathew Aylmer, and Miss Cooper, Margaret.

On 13th *Henry VIII.* was again done, for the first time for three years, but in *four acts* instead of three, as hitherto, Miss Glyn being Queen Katharine. *Speed the Plough* was played for the first time, for the benefit of Mr. Greenwood, acting manager: Marston personating Bob Handy; Hoskins, Farmer Ashfield; and Mrs. Marston, Dame Ashfield.

On 18th *The Gamester* was done, with Miss Cooper as Mrs. Beverly; and *Much Ado About Nothing*, for that lady's benefit.

After Christmas, in addition to the plays already mentioned, *The Stranger* was acted some nights until the 29th January, when *King John* was again produced—cast generally as before, with the exception of the Dauphin of France and Constance, now both played for the first time by Mr. G. K. Dickinson and Miss Glyn.

On 22nd February *Virginius* was acted again for a few

* I saw it the first night, when it was as successful, and he was greater, if possible, than when he first acted it in 1842 at Drury Lane.—W. M. P.

nights; and on 28th February Beaumont and Fletcher's play of *The Honest Man's Fortune* was produced, re-modelled by R. H. Horne, author of *Cosmo de Medici*, *Gregory VII.*, &c., &c. Phelps acted Montague (a ruined nobleman); Marston, the Duke of Orleans; Dickinson, the Earl of Amiens; Hoskins, Longueville; George Bennett, La Poop; and A. Younge, Malicorn; Miss Cooper, Lamira; and Miss Huddart, Duchess of Orleans. The play was very successful, and had a good run.

On 12th March he again produced Massinger's *Fatal Dowry*—cast as before, with the exception that Hoskins now played Young Novall; and on 21st March *Richard III.* from the original text—Miss Glyn playing Queen Margaret; Marston, Richmond; and G. K. Dickinson, Duke of Clarence; the other principal characters as before—for his benefit, he playing the Crooked-backed Tyrant, with Morton's comedy of *The School of Reform*, in which Hoskins played Robert Tyke (a great character of the elder Emery's) exceedingly well. All these pieces were acted in alternation night after night until 16th April, when *Julius Cæsar* was again produced, G. Bennett still playing Cassius, Marston, Marc Antony, and he himself Brutus.

On 20th April Murphy's comedy of *All in the Wrong* was acted, but Mr. Phelps and Miss Glyn were out of the bill. On 30th April *Money* was again acted; on 7th May *Jane Shore*, in which he did not appear.

On 10th May a new and original tragedy, by Mr. G. H. Boker of Philadelphia, was produced, entitled *Calaynos*, which was a great success. On this George Daniel, the celebrated critic, the "D. G." of Cumberland's edition of acting plays, wrote (after giving a minute description of the play) as follows:—

"This tragedy is written by Mr. George H. Boker, an American author, and it does honour to the literature of his country. The plot is simple and compact; it might have had more action, but would that have conduced to its perspicuity? The language is poetical and elegant, often dignified and impassioned. The characters are skilfully conceived and elaborately wrought. There is some excellent comedy in those of the Abigail, the Secretary, and Soto. Soto's account of himself—

'But I'm the greatest liar in all Seville;
A bastard born, and therefore false by nature;—
My family, sir, before me, all were liars,'

is exceedingly quaint and humorous. The Lady Alda is carefully and delicately brought out in the early scenes; in the latter ones she is terribly in earnest. Martina is the incarnation of feminine impertinence—agreeable for her satirical wit, but detestable for her unwomanly treachery. It is in Calaynos, however, that the author has put forth all his strength. This pattern of true nobility is no talkative, do-nothing sentimentalist; his philanthropy is active and rational. Abstruse study, which too often dulls the wits and deadens the hearts of other men, with him quickens the one and animates the other. It is not *his* fault if he thinks too favourably of mankind; for *that* let mankind bear the blame. He has learned how to prize friendship; and he will not, to what *he* considers false, malignant scandal, sacrifice his friend. This sternly virtuous principle costs him his earthly happiness and his life. He dies, as he had lived, nobly; intent upon and hopeful of the future; a stoic up to that sublime point where stoicism ceases not to be a virtue, and in those majestic attributes that have made man a little lower than the angels—a MAN!

"These lights and shades of human character Mr. Phelps delineated with consummate art. The didactic portion of the dialogue he delivered with that subdued intonation, earnestness, and energy that have won him the approval of the judicious; and where the language rises into high power and passion, *he*, too, rose with the language, and triumphantly realized the poet's inspiration. His acting touched the minutest points; it was alternately elaborate and intense."

The cast of the principal characters in this tragedy was as follows:—

Calaynos (a wealthy nobleman),	Mr. Phelps.
Don Luis (his friend), ...	Mr. H. Marston.
Oliver (Calaynos's secretary), ...	Mr. G. K. Dickinson.
Soto (Don Luis's servant), ...	Mr. Hoskins.
Donna Alda (wife to Calaynos),	Miss Cooper.
Martina (her maid), ...	Mrs. H. Marston.

The third and last scene of the fourth act was one of Mr. Phelps's most powerful pieces of acting, displaying first intense passion, then pathos just as touching. Some performances of *The Iron Chest*, *The Lady of Lyons*, and *Virginius* brought the season to a close on 30th May, 1849.

1849—1850.

The sixth season commenced on 25th August, 1849, with *The Tempest*, Mr. Henry Nye making his first appearance in London as Trinculo, and a Miss Carlstein as Miranda; Mr. Dickinson also playing Ferdinand for the first time. Other

characters as before. On the 30th, Mrs. Centlivre's comedy of *The Belle's Stratagem* was produced, for the first appearance in London of Miss Fitzpatrick from the Theatre Royal, Dublin, as Letitia Hardy—a successful *début*. G. Bennett was Sir George Touchwood; Hoskins, Flutter; and Henry Marston, Doricourt, the best performance of that character in our time. Mrs. H. Marston was Mrs. Rackett, also a fine performance, and Miss T. Bassano was Lady Frances Touchwood.

On 6th September *The Love Chase* was performed, for Miss Fitzpatrick's Constance. Mrs. Marston was the Widow Green (worthy of Mrs. Glover, the original); Hoskins, Wildrake; A. Younge, Sir William Fondlove; and Dickinson, Master Waller. On 10th September *The Merchant of Venice*; on 19th *Measure for Measure*, with Miss Glyn as Isabella, for the first time, and Dickinson as Claudio.

On 1st October *Othello*, for the first time for two years, with Miss Glyn as Emilia, Dickinson as Cassio, and Hoskins, Roderigo. On 5th October Colley Cibber's comedy, *She Would and She Would Not*, Hoskins playing Trappanti; Marston, Don Philip; Dickinson, Don Octavio; A. Younge, Don Manuel; and Hypolita, Miss Fitzpatrick. On the 8th October, *Othello*; 10th October, *Merchant of Venice*.

On 22nd October Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* was produced for the first time, from the original text, and with great splendour. Mr. Phelps played Antony; G. K. Dickinson, Octavius Cæsar; Marston, Sextus Pompeius; and G. Bennett, Enobarbus. Miss Glyn played Cleopatra with brilliant effect. The production was a great success, drawing the town; and the critics as well as the public were loud in their praises. It had a long run to crowded houses. His Antony was a noble performance, and Bennett's Enobarbus a fine piece of declamatory acting. Miss Glyn's Cleopatra was the best character she ever performed, either before or after. George Daniel, the critic of Cumberland's edition of acting plays, and who had seen a great deal of the stage from the year 1800, and knew the Kembles and George Frederick Cooke, said it was the most magnificent revival that had appeared since the *palmy* days of the great and classical John Kemble; and F. G. Tomlins, in the *Morning Advertiser*, wrote as follows:—

SADLER'S WELLS.

"Last night the tragedy of Antony and Cleopatra was performed for the first time at this theatre—adding another to the Shakespearean triumphs gained within its walls. The cast was admirable; and the able management at this justly-popular house has most efficiently called into service its resources to render justice to the grand classic drama which Shakespeare penned in glowing language of such poetic and fervent eloquence. The difficulties must ever be great to equal the ideal of 'a pair so famous' as the renowned Roman hero and fascinating heroine of the celebrated play. The difficulties are arduous enough as respects a suitable impersonation of Marc Antony; but to realize upon the stage the beauteous Egyptian Queen, whose 'person beggar'd all description,' must ever far surpass them. In spite of all those difficulties, however, Miss Glyn, on this trying occasion, succeeded admirably. She imparted singular grace, animation, warmth, and earnestness to her performance, and afforded in it one of the most striking examples we have yet witnessed of the progress she is making in her profession. Throughout she was skilful and effective; and though there was an occasional abruptness in the changes of mood of mind and tone of voice, those minor defects will disappear when the talented actress is more at home in and accustomed to the character. 'The feminine arts which distinguish Cleopatra' (and 'some of which,' said the grave and sententious Johnson, 'are too low') were cleverly and interestingly depicted by Miss Glyn. In the earlier portions of the play she was the gay-hearted, hero-conquering, and subduing queen; while in the latter scenes the fall of pride and beauty, in combination with the work of grief, were portrayed with great power and pathos. Mr. Phelps deserves much praise for his performance of Marc Antony: it was careful and effective; and the struggles between an enthralling passion and a sense of departing honour and glory, were represented most ably. Mr. Henry Marston was admirable as Pompeius, and Mr. G. Bennett elicited much and well-earned applause by the rugged honesty of manner with which he acted the part of Enobarbus. Mr. G. K. Dickinson, though he occasionally allowed too much energy to carry himself and voice away, was a very satisfactory Octavius Cæsar; while the other characters were filled in with judgment and general efficiency. Indeed, the *tout ensemble* is always laboriously regarded at this house, and the result is a harmony between the various elements which conduces materially to the always successful issue. Miss Aldridge as Octavia, and Miss T. Bassano as Charmian, were pleasing representatives of their separate characters. The tragedy has been altogether most carefully and effectively produced. The attention to detail here merits high praise. All was in keeping and accordance. The scenery (painted by Mr. F. Fenton) was extremely good. Many of the Egyptian scenes, indeed, were admirable, and told very successfully. The dresses and general

decorations, too, showed the same care and judicious superintendence. In fact, the tragedy was in all respects very interestingly and impressively represented and placed upon the stage; and the loud plaudits that marked its progress, and attended its conclusion, were only just tributes to the merits of the whole performance. Miss Glyn and Mr. Phelps first came forward in obedience to the loud and unanimous demands of the audience; and afterwards similar compliments were accorded to Mr. G. Bennett and Mr. G. K. Dickinson. The theatre was very fully attended."

On 26th October Mrs. Centlivre's comedy of *The Busy-Body* was acted, with Miss Fitzpatrick as Miranda; Mrs. H. Marston, Patch; and Miss T. Bassano, Isabinda. Marston was Sir George Airy; A. Younge, Sir Francis Gripe; Williams, Sir Jealous Traffick; and G. K. Dickinson, Charles.

On November 2nd, Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer* was acted. Marston was Young Marlow; A. Younge, Mr. Harcastle; Henry Nye, Tony Lumpkin; Graham, Hastings; and H. Mellon, Sir Charles Marlow; Mrs. Marston, Mrs. Harcastle; Miss Fitzpatrick, Miss Harcastle; and Miss Aldridge, Miss Neville.

November 22nd, *The Hunchback*. On 26th November Henry IV. (First Part) was again acted, for the first time for three years; on this occasion with Marston as Hotspur, and Hoskins, Prince of Wales; Belford as Poins; Miss T. Bassano, Lady Percy; and Mrs. Marston, Mrs. Quickly; other characters as before, Phelps of course being the Falstaff.

On 7th December Cherry's comedy of *The Soldier's Daughter*. Widow Cheerly, Miss Fitzpatrick; Frank Heartall, Marston; Governor Heartall, A. Younge; Young Melfort, G. K. Dickinson.

On 12th December, a new and original tragedy from the pen of F. G. Tomlins, entitled *Garcia*, was produced, and successfully, but there was not much money in it (in manager's phraseology). The *Morning Chronicle* spoke of it thus:—

SADLER'S WELLS.

"*Garcia*, or the Noble Error, is the title of a tragedy produced here last evening, and written by Mr. F. G. Tomlins. This gentleman, we need scarcely remind our readers, is well known in the literary world as one of the most staunch and earnest advocates of the claims of the British drama. He is also secretary to the Shakespeare Society.

"The scene of this drama is laid in and near Seville, and the period of the action is towards the close of the fifteenth century, when the Inquisition, under the terrible Torquemada, held absolute dominion

over a bigoted king and people, and sought to abase and crush the nobles. Garcia belongs to this class. He is the heir of his house, and is about to be formally invested with his fief, which, during his minority, has been held for him by his mother. The family have some taint of Moorish blood in them, and are suspected by the Inquisition; but motives of humanity induce the Countess of Vigera, on the night before the investiture of her son, to give temporary shelter to a Morisco, who is pursued by the Familiars of the Office. This brings her under the grasp of the Inquisition, and they have condemned her to death. Powerful intercession, however, is made with the Crown, which refuses to ratify the sentence, unless the chief witness (the sheltered Morisco himself) again confesses the guilt of the Countess before the Council of State. Garcia, who, according to the law, is not allowed to communicate with the accused, is ignorant of this, until informed of it by Don Pacheco, a noble who is leagued with a wide conspiracy of nobles for the overthrow of the dreaded tribunal. Pacheco, wishing to force Garcia to join them, works upon his filial love, till he waylays and slays the Morisco, then on his way to give his evidence at the Court; and in the commission of this murder consists Garcia's 'noble error.' The crime turns out to have been needlessly perpetrated; for between the first suggestion and the execution, Pacheco has learned (but conceals it from Garcia) that the Countess has already been released by an unusual impulse of royal clemency; so that when the mother returns to her home, the son suffers the double agony of a guilty conscience and the discovery that he has been duped by Pacheco. The Countess dies of grief; and Garcia, after atoning by a full confession, is led off to the dungeons of the Inquisition as the curtain falls. There is, of course, a slight second plot interwoven with the other. Camilla (the sister) is enamoured of Pacheco, while her brother favours the suit of Don Manuel. Discovering the baseness of the former, she recognizes the worth and rewards the love of the rejected suitor, who has shown an honourable devotion to the family in their suffering, and has, in fact, been the chief agent in procuring the pardon of the Countess.

"As the spirit of the action centres in the conscience-touched struggles of Garcia, between his horror of murder and his desire to save his mother's life, it is open to the objection, rather technical than æsthetical, that a Spanish noble of the fifteenth century, goaded by such a pressure, would have thought no more of killing a Morisco than of shooting a dog; and dramatic probabilities are violated when a witness so important as the Morisco is allowed by the Inquisitors to leave his dungeon unattended, and journey alone, at night, across the Sierra to the seat of the Court. But yielding these obvious objections to the exigencies of the dramatic art, we have pleasure in saying that in other respects the tragedy is skilfully constructed. It depends on plot and incident rather than on prominence and development of character, yet the various characters are boldly and clearly outlined; they portray themselves in their action and sentiment;

and none of the moving force of the piece is lost in descriptions, or by lying in wait for 'points.'

"The first and second acts are more than clever in construction, and the opening scene of the third act (where the Countess is interrogated in the prison of the Inquisition) is powerfully worked up. The rest of the third act flags a little; it is not even strengthened by the scene where Garcia is tempted by Pacheco; but the fourth act, in which Garcia's reverence for the divine command is overcome by his desire to save his mother, and especially the scene when the Morisco is murdered, are full of dramatic power.

"This tragedy is written for the most part in blank verse, sometimes so strangely halting and imperfect as to lead to the supposition that the author must have intentionally imitated what are only occasional negligences in the Elizabethan models; for the slightest care and transposition of words would have rendered the rhythm steady and melodious. The language is nervous and simple, and the images bold and forcible; yet there are no passages to which can be given the high name of poetry, though the temptations to indulgence are many. On the other hand, there is a fine moral tone throughout; and we could quote several passages of great power, concentrated thought, and beauty, but that they depend so much upon the context. It is worthy of remark that the audience in the pit and gallery generally selected the best passages—best in diction, as well as in sentiment—for their enthusiastic applause.

"The acting of the play was excellent. Although Garcia would seem to have been intended by the author as a somewhat immature and irresolute person, Mr. Phelps realized a clear conception, subduing his iron style to the softer features of the character with great success. He threw himself into the murder scene with a terrible energy; and after his crime he depicted his gnawings of conscience and soul abasement with true artistic power.

"Miss Glyn, as the Countess, had a character not entirely suited to her, but sustained the high reputation she has already acquired with the audiences of this theatre, more especially in the scene with the Inquisitors (her exclamation, 'On Heaven I rely,' was a fine embodiment of human energy, inspired by a lofty piety), and in the final scene of the tragedy.

"The other characters were more or less well filled by Miss T. Bassano, Mr. H. Marston, Mr. Dickinson, and Mr. Hoskins. And the 'making up' of the three chief Inquisitors was perfect. The scenery, too, is extremely good, and some effective tableaux are produced; as, for instance, in the investiture scene, and in the last scene, where the soldiers of the Inquisition take possession of Garcia's castle.

"The tragedy was completely successful, the author being called forward by acclamation. We have to congratulate Mr. Tomlins as well upon the actual value of this work, as on the promise it affords that we may hereafter expect from him still more valuable contributions to our cotemporary dramatic literature."

On 20th December *The Gamester and She Would and She Would Not*, for Hoskins's benefit. On Boxing Night *Venice Preserved* was acted. On 4th January, 1850, *Measure for Measure*, with Marston as the Duke. On 16th January *Calaynos* was again acted; and on 21st, the first four acts of *Henry VIII.* On 28th *The Merchant of Venice.* On 1st February, *The Honeymoon*, he playing the Duke Aranza; Hoskins, Rolando; Belford, Count Montalban; and A. Younge, Jaques, the Mock Duke; Miss Fitzpatrick, Juliana. *The Hunchback* had been acted several nights during this season, with G. Bennett as the Hunchback; Marston, Sir Thomas Clifford; Hoskins, Lord Tinsel; Dickinson, Modus; Miss Glyn, Julia; and Miss Fitzpatrick, Helen.

On 11th February a new romantic play by George Bennett (tragedian), entitled *Retribution*, was produced, in which the whole company performed. This piece also was very successful, and his performance of *Blackbourn* was a thing to be remembered. It was dedicated to Mr. Phelps by the author in the following terms:—

To SAMUEL PHELPS, ESQ.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"I eagerly embrace the opportunity afforded me in dedicating this play to you, to express, though briefly, yet earnestly, the unfeigned pleasure and lively gratitude with which I do so.

"Your acute discrimination, and your unwearied exertions as stage manager, as well as the inimitable manner in which you sustained your part in the play, call for a more lively expression of admiration and thankfulness from me than I can find words to convey. From the moment you became lessee and director of Sadler's Wells Theatre, the legitimate drama, which had been so long in a drooping state, began to revive. Aided by your untiring efforts, and fostered by your skilful exertions, it has progressed, and been encouraged by a generous and discerning public, as has been amply evidenced by the six cheering and successful seasons which have crowned your laudable zeal. Known as it is, that your aim has been

'To hold, as 't were, the mirror up to Nature,'

and in all things to promote the objects of dramatic art, it cannot be surprising that your laudable course should have

stimulated others to follow so excellent an example, and secured to yourself the high esteem and great respect of all around you. In which feeling no one, believe me, more largely participates than,

“My dear Sir,
“Your sincere Friend and grateful Servant,
“GEORGE J. BENNETT.”

“D. G.,” in Cumberland’s edition of acting plays, says:—
“Retribution was first produced at Sadler’s Wells on Monday, 11th February, 1850. It was received by a judicious and crowded audience with unanimous applause—another triumph for that (now) classic little theatre. Mr. Phelps played Blackbourn, and a performance more discriminating and powerful we have not seen for many a day. His grand climax was at the end of the third act, than which nothing could be finer. Mr. Bennett was the Sir Baldwin, and he hit off the rascally Roundhead to the life. His soliloquies were carefully studied and energetically delivered. The gallant young Cavalier, Philip, and the delicate stripling who dies for love, Edwin, were ably represented by Mr. Henry Marston and Mr. G. K. Dickinson. Mr. Graham (a very correct and rising actor) made the most (as he always does) of a small part, Humphrey; Mr. A. Younge entered body and soul into the congenial character of Sir Robert; and Miss Glyn, in Alice, was all the most fastidious critic could desire.” The cast was—Sir Baldwin Briarly, Mr. G. Bennett; Sir Robert Raby, Mr. A. Younge; Edwin Briarly, Mr. G. K. Dickinson; Philip, Mr. H. Marston; Blackbourn, Mr. Phelps; Captain Rowley, Mr. Belford; Humphrey, Mr. Graham; Alice Raby, Miss Glyn.

The *Weekly News* spoke of it as follows:—

SADLER’S WELLS.

“Mr. George Bennett, an actor long deservedly popular in several Shakespearcan characters, has, following the good old custom of an actor becoming dramatist, brought out at this theatre a very successful five-act drama, which he properly entitles ‘a Romantic Play.’ It would be wrong to test it by the Elizabethan drama of that class, for the romantic plays of that era combined the highest species of poetry with the most exact and beautiful characterization. Mr. Bennett has not drawn his inspiration from those deep and translucent wells; but,

coming nearer to his own time, has dipped into the fountains of Scott and the French school. So far as he has gone, he has been perfectly successful, and has manifested an ingenuity of contrivance and readiness and animation of utterance which insure him a highly-satisfactory success. The story is complicated, yet clearly developed, and so well contrived as to unwind itself so as to constantly stimulate the interest of the audience, and at the same time afford genuine opportunities for pointed situations and well-sustained scenes. It is said to be founded on a tale that appeared in *The Keepsake*, about 1839; but we can detect other sources whence materials and ideas have been gleaned. One effective scene corresponds very closely with the opening interview in Scott's *Rokeby*, and another with one in *The Tower of Nesle*. This is of little moment, as the effort of a dramatist, and especially of an actor-dramatist, must be to produce striking and interesting effects: and, certainly, we have not for a long time seen a play where so much interest is so genuinely excited. Of profound dramatic interest, either serious or comic, there is but little, Scott being, rather than Shakespeare, the model of the author. The superficiality of character, rather than character itself, is given; and the language is rather happily descriptive of external events than indicative of those deep-seated emotions which characterize so peculiarly the old and true dramatist. In this respect it may be said to bear the same relation to the great drama that Rob Roy does to Richard III., or the Bride of Lammermoor to Hamlet. It is essentially of the melodramatic school, but then it is certainly of the *première qualité*; and is not without touches of the deeper and grander class of plays.

"It would give but a very imperfect notion of the effect of the drama to detail the story as it ultimately appears, for the merit of the construction consists in the artful mode in which each event is made to tell on the audience and to produce stirring scenes. The fairer method is to follow out the development as it occurs in the acting. The scene opens with an old Cavalier, his daughter, and an adopted son, which adopted son is accepted by the daughter, and wonderful to say, approved of by the father. An amiable and honourable youth, of a very effeminate character, is dying for love of Alice (not Gray, but) Raby; and one of the best scenes in the play is the passionate declaration of this youth. The first act ends with a scene between Philip and Alice, the youth (Edwin) having been discovered in making his declaration. The second act opens up new ground. Sir Baldwin (the father of Edwin) discloses by a remorseful soliloquy that he has induced a former comrade to destroy his wife from a false suspicion, and so possessed himself of estates which the deceived husband has abandoned. It appears, however, that this husband (De Lacy) has, after twenty years' absence, returned rich from buccaneering in the western seas; and a comrade (Blackbourn), who pretends to have been wronged, has been induced by Sir Baldwin to shoot him in a *mêlée* in one of the battles of the period. Here is the situation in *Rokeby*, between Lord Oswald and Bertram Risingham. We cannot, however,

follow out the increasing involvement and evolvment of the plot; suffice it to say, that in the play the assumed ruffian and presumed tool is De Lacy himself, Philip the foundling is his son; and thus efficient opportunity is afforded Mr. Phelps, who played De Lacy, alias Blackbourn, for that alternate ruggedness of manner and parental pathos which no man on the stage can give with such effect. The discovery between the father and the son, and the story of his life as revealed to his new-found son, drew down universal applause, and Mr. Phelps was obliged to appear at the end of the third act to receive the especial approbation of the audience. The latter portion of the play becomes more melodramatic, and Sir Baldwin is somewhat too monstrous in his guilt. He betrays his party (that of the Parliament); insinuates to Alice, in order to prevent the marriage, that Philip is her natural brother; and at last conducts himself rather after the stage than the natural fashion of such characters. He has all the Raby family in his power, forces on the marriage, threatens death and destruction, but is arrested in his accumulated guilt by the discoveries made by De Lacy and the exposition of his universal villainy. The applause was loud at each of these climaxes, but, we must say, was more uproarious than judicious. The early part of the play is by far the best, both in writing, characterization, and construction; and is of an order that must entitle Mr. Bennett to a very fair position as a dramatic author. As a stage piece, it had many advantages: the scenery was entirely new for it; the stage business evidently the work of the author; the actors suitably cast, and admirably fitted for their respective parts: Mr. Bennett's own character, of course, elaborately and well developed; Mr. Phelps's in every way fitted to him as regards physique and powers; Miss Glyn's part, heightened by the fear of committing of incest, on purpose to give her the opportunity of expressing the deep emotions she can so well command—in all respects a difficult and ineffective part. The violence of a passion so great, thrown out suddenly from the bosom of a gentle and conventional young lady, is a very trying performance to the actress. She is without accessorial aids, and has to give the gesture and emotion of the deepest tragedy without the assistance of the pall and flowing robes. Miss Glyn, however, gave considerable power and effect to the situation, but it was felt to be an unnecessary introduction, and too obviously introduced for the purpose of producing a strong effect. Mr. Younge, as the old Cavalier, did not seem to us well suited; while Mr. Marston played all that was given to him by the author with the thorough artistic appreciation which characterizes his performances. The play and the performance are, however, both highly to be commended, and doubtless it will enjoy a long run, suiting, as it does so admirably, audience, performers, and theatre."

On 15th February The Wife was again produced for the *début* of a Miss Edwardes as Mariana. Marston was St. Pierre;

G. Bennett, Ferrado; and Dickinson, Leonardo. On 22nd February Love's Sacrifice, for the same lady.

On 8th March Massinger's *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* was again acted, Bennett being Lord Lovel; Marston, Welborn; A. Younge, Marrall; H. Nye, Justice Greedy; Graham, Allworth; Miss Edwardes, Margaret; and Mr. Phelps himself in his great character of Sir Giles Overreach.*

On 20th March, for his own benefit, he reproduced *Macbeth*, from the text as done in 1847. Cast as then, with the exception of Miss Glyn being now Lady *Macbeth*, and Miss Edwardes, Lady *Macduff*. He also played (for that night only) *Jeremy Diddler* in *Raising the Wind*, a favourite piece of eccentric light comedy of his. His *Macbeth* was, if possible, even greater than before, and the piece had again a long run.

G. K. Dickinson played for his own benefit, on 11th April, *Claude Melnotte* and *Doricourt*. *The Stranger* and *Werner* were both again acted in alternation with *Macbeth*, as Mr. Phelps could not act the latter character more than two nights together. *The Gamester* and *William Tell* were also acted several nights, as well as *Douglas* and *John Bull*.

On 16th May a performance was given in aid of the fund for the Great Exhibition of 1851, under the patronage of the Duke of Cambridge, and on the committee were all the leading literary men of the day.

The performance consisted of an address written by R. H. Horne, and spoken by Mr. Phelps; the four acts of *Henry VIII.*; Ernst, the great violinist, played *Le Carnaval de Venise*; the trial scene from *The Merchant of Venice*, with Mr. Horne as *Shylock* (a great mistake of his the attempting it); a concert by several celebrated vocalists; and the farce of *The Silent Woman*. The prices this night were nearly doubled, and the amount given to the fund a good one, for the house was crammed.

On 23rd May Phelps acted *Octavian* in *The Mountaineers*, for the benefit of Mr. Greenwood, for the first time in London;

* His performance of this part will never be forgotten by me. Many old play-goers have told me over and over again that it was a more powerful and terrific piece of acting than Edmund Kean's. I certainly cannot myself imagine anything could surpass it.—W. M. P.

and the theatre closed on the 24th with *The School for Scandal* and *The Wonder*, for Miss Fitzpatrick's benefit, in neither of which did Mr. Phelps appear.

1850—1851.

The seventh season commenced on 17th August, 1850, with *Hamlet* for three nights; and on Thursday, 22nd, Leigh Hunt's play of *The Legend of Florence* (originally produced by Madame Vestris during her management of Covent Garden some nine years before), Phelps playing Francesco Agolanti, originally performed by Mr. Moore; and an American actor, Mr. Waller, Antonio Rondinelli, played originally by Anderson; Miss Glyn, Ginevra, primarily played by Ellen Tree. This production was very successful, and with *Hamlet*, *William Tell*, *Coriolanus*, &c., it ran until 30th September, when *Macbeth* was again produced, with Miss Glyn as Lady Macbeth.

On 4th October *Much Ado About Nothing* was again produced, with Miss Glyn as Beatrice. On 14th October *Othello* was again enacted, a Miss Lyons making her first appearance as Desdemona, and Miss Glyn as Emilia. Mr. Phelps was Othello; Marston, Iago; and Hoskins, Cassio. On 18th October *Measure for Measure* was again repeated, with Miss Glyn as Isabella, and Marston as the Duke. On 23rd October *Julius Cæsar* was done; on 25th *The Honeymoon*, with Miss Glyn as the Duchess, and Marston as the Duke. On 28th *Cymbeline* was reproduced, with Miss Lyons as Imogen. On 1st November *Venice Preserved*, with Marston, G. Bennett, and Miss Glyn in the principal characters.

On 7th November (first time for two years) *The Bridal*, with Miss Glyn as Evadne. On 13th *The Hunchback*, with Miss Glyn as Julia. On 16th *The Gamester*, Phelps playing Beverly; Bennett, Stukely; Marston, Lewson; and Miss Glyn, Mrs. Beverly.

On 20th November John Webster's tragedy of *The Duchess of Malfi*, reconstructed for stage representation by R. H. Horne, was produced with great success. A prologue written by Mr.

Horne was spoken each evening by Mr. Hoskins. The cast was as follows:—

Ferdinand (Duke of Calabria),	... ..	Mr. Phelps.
Cardinal Graziani (his Brother),	... ..	Mr. Graham.
Malateste (Prince of Albano),	... ..	Mr. H. Mellon.
Antonio Bologno (Steward to the Duchess),	... ..	Mr. Waller.
Delio (a Friend of Antonio),	... ..	Mr. C. Wheatleigh.
Bosola (a Man of desperate Fortunes),	... ..	Mr. G. Bennett.
Marina (Duchess of Malfi, and Sister of the Duke),	...	Miss Glyn.

Here, again, Mr. Phelps would have preferred to play Bosola, but there was no one to play the Duke. His acting (in the last act especially, depicting wolf-madness) was very highly spoken of by the critics, and the play had a long run.

The *Winter's Tale*, and *Brutus*, or the *Fall of Tarquin*, were again played some nights; and on 19th December *Othello* was acted for Hoskins's benefit, he trying *Othello*, and Mr. Phelps playing *Iago* for the first time under his own management. On *Boxing Night* *Isabella* was acted, and then *The Duchess of Malfi* for the entire month of January, 1851, with occasional performances of *The Winter's Tale* and *The Bridal*. On 30th January *Cymbeline* was acted; and on 3rd February *Feudal Times*; 7th, *Love's Sacrifice*; 10th, *Feudal Times*; and 14th, *Fazio*; 17th, *Hamlet*; 20th, *Othello*; 24th, *A Winter's Tale*.

On 27th *King John* was again produced for his benefit, and the farce of *Turning the Tables*, in which he played *Jeremiah Bumps*. The house was a very crowded one, and it was the night after Mr. Macready had taken his farewell of the stage at Drury Lane; and those who were present at both performances said it seemed like a repetition of the preceding night as regarded the enthusiasm of the public, Phelps receiving as great a reception on first being seen as Macready did the night before. They evidently meant to show him that he stood at least as high in their regard as the future leader of the stage, as his predecessor had done in the past; there was no mistaking their meaning, and his great popularity.

Then followed, in alternation with *King John*, *Fazio*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Henry VIII.*, *The Duchess of Malfi*, *Measure for Measure*, *Richelieu*, *The Wife*, and *Hamlet*, to Easter. On Easter Monday *The Merchant of Venice* was acted; on 28th

April, Werner; 3rd May, The Stranger; 5th, Hamlet; 14th, Virginius; 19th, Othello; and A New Way to Pay Old Debts to Whitsuntide. Whit Monday, Fazio and Heir at Law, for Mrs. Marston's benefit.

1851—1852.

The eighth season commenced on 26th July, 1851; and as nearly if not all the pieces which he had produced during his first seven seasons were reproduced from time to time during the eighteen years of his management, henceforth we shall only enumerate new productions.

His old friend and coadjutor, Mrs. Warner, having made up her mind to go to America, he entered into arrangements that she should appear in a few of her principal characters, so as to give her a good start. She appeared as Queen Katharine, Hermione, Lady Macbeth, Portia, and Mrs. Oakley for twelve nights.

Miss Glyn then took up her original position for a short time, and opened as Lady Macbeth on 11th August; but soon after, having been cast for the Queen-Mother in Hamlet (a character she had frequently acted), she declined to appear in it, and the consequence was she left the theatre. Her position was soon after filled up by Miss Goddard from the Hull Theatre, and she opened in Lady Macbeth also, on 8th September; she was successful, but did not possess Miss Glyn's abilities.

On the 15th September he produced with great splendour Shakespeare's Timon of Athens, and again made a tremendous effect on play-goers generally in the character of Timon. Old *habitués* and the critics who remembered Edmund Kean in this character all said Phelps surpassed him. Some fine criticisms on this performance and production will be found further on. George Bennett's Apemantus was a worthy companion portrait; Marston this time played Alcibiades (on its next production Apemantus), and the whole strength of this fine working company was engaged in the piece. Timon was played some forty nights between its first production and Christmas.

On 25th September the comedy of Secrets Worth Knowing was acted, with Hoskins and Mrs. Marston in the principal characters.

On 16th October Miss Fanny Vining made her first appearance as Beatrice, in *Much Ado About Nothing*; and Mr. Frederick Robinson, from the Theatre Royal, Edinburgh, who appeared on the first night of the season as Cromwell, now replaced Mr. G. K. Dickinson as Claudio.

On 27th October Mrs. Lovell's new play of *Ingomar*, which had been produced at Drury Lane by Anderson with some success, was put on the stage by Mr. Phelps, he playing *Ingomar*; Bennett, Myron; J. W. Ray, *Polydor*; Barrett, *Lycon*; and Miss Vining, *Parthenia*. The play went well, and the public were pleased with it. There was some very nice writing in it, but the principal characters were not sufficiently strong.

On the 27th November, for the benefit of Mr. Greenwood, he produced Macklin's comedy of *The Man of the World*, playing Sir Pertinax Macsycophant for the first time. He made one of his *very* greatest successes in this character, and it remained to the last one of his *most popular* assumptions, George Daniel and other old critics and play-goers declaring it to be finer than George Frederick Cooke's, which had been the only other great delineation of the character; Macklin himself was the original. It was *attempted* by an actor named Maywood (who played comic Old Men in farces) at the Haymarket in 1840, and the piece had some little success; but this, we think, was more to be attributed to Mr. Phelps's acting than to anything else, although he was only the Egerton on that occasion. Charles Young acted it in his time, and Edmund Kean, we believe, tried it, but in English and not Lowland Scotch, if we are correctly informed. Mr. Phelps's performance, however, of this character never failed to draw immense audiences wherever he appeared in it, in either England, Scotland, or Ireland. . It was a piece of acting once seen never forgotten.

The following is from the *Morning Advertiser*, and was written by F. G. Tomlins:—

SADLER'S WELLS.

"The occasion of Mr. Greenwood's benefit last night at this theatre has given the town the opportunity of seeing Mr. Phelps in a new line of character, and the performance of Macklin's somewhat old-fashioned but admirable comedy of *The Man of the World* has enabled that able and versatile actor to add another character to his well-stored *répertoire*.

“Sir Pertinax Macsycophant has, with some trifling exceptions, when it has been revived to show the capacity of some actor to enunciate the Scottish dialect, been abandoned since the powerful and sarcastic Cooke gave the terrible portrait in its full vitality. The celebrated men who have since occupied the foremost position of the theatre have not attempted the delineation, though it embodies the most available and the most legitimate means of showing the actor's highest art—the power of impersonation, and the enunciation of a drastic satire of the highest flavour and the most potent effect. The character is in itself repulsive; the author has drawn it with a rigid regard for truth that seems to have been dictated by a personal abhorrence. It has not one popular speech—it has not one graceful phrase—it has not a single redeeming point. The resources of the theatre have not been called in to aid its situations or enforce its points. It is a character with which nothing can be done but by the aid of the purest art—it tests the actor in every word—it demands in every line the consummate performer. It is admirably drawn, and contrives to rivet the attention for five acts, and to supply the place of plot, sentiment, and action. To succeed in it is to achieve a high triumph, and this triumph Mr. Phelps attained by the purest and severest exercise of his art.

“From his first interview with his son till his diabolical and final curse, every tone, every look was emphatic and characteristic. In his devilish history of the crawling arts by which he attained station and wealth, he rose to the sublime of comedy, and the bitter satire thrilled whilst it almost appalled. It unmasked the villain, but the character was admirably developed, and, safe in a nobler state of society, we could afford to laugh, or rather to scoff, at the unmitigated scoundrel. We felt that the whip of satire was in a powerful hand, and the sordid vices were receiving a wholesome and severe chastisement. The great merit of the performance consists in its being given with tremendous power, and in its yet preserving the *vis comica*. Such a scourging of vice elevates the theatre into a wholesome purifier, and its professors into valuable assistants to moral teachers. The portrayal, as a piece of art, is beyond common praise, and must attract every connoisseur of the drama to witness it. We have not space to point out the various excellences of the portrait, but can truly say we never remember—though we remember the whole of the career of the elder Kean and of Miss O'Neill—to have seen a more perfect and more potent piece of acting.

“The comedy was tastefully put on the stage, and performed in all respects well by Mr. Barrett, Mr. F. Robinson, Mrs. Marston, and Miss Fitzpatrick, the latter being very agreeable and charming in Lady Rodolpha Lumbercourt. The house was crowded in every part by a most respectable audience, the esteemed character of the acting manager always drawing a remarkably full house. And we are sure the lovers of dramatic art will feel obliged to him for giving them the opportunity of seeing Mr. Phelps to such extraordinary advantage. It will revive the popularity of a comedy which by no means should

become obsolete; for though originally perhaps a little too much directed against a particular nation, it is still universal in its application."

On 6th March, 1852, he produced another new play by the Rev. James White, entitled *James VI., or the Gowrie Plot*. He himself acted the King; Marston, the Earl of Gowrie; Bennett, Logan of Restalrig; F. Robinson, Alexander Ruthven; H. Mellon, Sir John Ramsay; and Barrett, John Ayliffe (English Envoy); Miss Goddard, the Countess Gowrie; and Miss Cooper, Catharine Logan. On 9th he played it for his own benefit. It was very successful, and enhanced both his and the author's reputation. His acting of James with the Scottish dialect was looked upon as another marvellous feat, and his make-up for the character was perfect.

On 22nd April Talfourd's tragedy of *Ion* was acted, and again on the 28th, for F. Robinson's benefit, Mr. Phelps playing his great character of *Adrastus*.*

1852—1853.

The ninth season commenced on 28th August, 1852, with *The Man of the World*; then followed *First Part of Henry IV.*; and on 1st September, for the first time, Shakespeare's comedy of *All's Well that Ends Well*, in which he played *Parolles* with great success.†

Then followed *King Lear*, *The Merchant's Wedding*, *Arden of Feversham*, *The City Madam*, *The Stranger*, *A Woman Never Vext*; and on 25th October *Henry V.* was produced for the first time, with a fine cast. He played the King, and right nobly did he bear himself. On this production we cannot do better than at once quote F. G. Tomlins's criticism as it appeared in the *Morning Advertiser*:—

* This performance had such an effect upon the young actor that he told me only eighteen months ago he had never forgotten it, in fact, it was as vivid at that moment as the night he first acted it with him, and would be remembered whilst life lasted.—W. M. P.

† I sat that night next to Mr. Justice Talfourd, who I remember was very loud in his praises. F. G. Tomlins, I remember, said he would rather it had had a little more of the *Falstaff* in it and less of the *Pistol*, but that nevertheless it was a very fine performance.—W. M. P.

SADLER'S WELLS THEATRE.

“This age has been prolific in profound commentators on our great national dramatist, and amongst these lucid expositors of Shakespeare the managers of this theatre have a fair right to be included. They have deeply studied the great plays, and have illustrated them with a care and intelligence which has reproduced them in consonance with the mighty author's conception. If, unfortunately, their illustration is of a temporary kind, it would be unjust that the acknowledgment of their efforts should be equally fleeting; and it therefore becomes us to record the pains and ability with which they produce in succession these powerful dramas.

“The latest fruit of their labours is the reproduction of the war play of Henry V. last night; and in so doing they have illustrated it historically and archæologically, as well as dramatically. The costumes have been attended to with as much care as expense; the architecture has been carefully considered; and the illustrations have all the gorgeousness that belongs to the middle ages. The play must always have been a spectacle, and a showy one, although the constant excuses of the Chorus show us how incompetent the author felt the appliances of his stage were to express the grand and magnificent events he sought to illustrate. We may here incidentally mention, that the Chorus sounds like a continuous reply to attacks, now lost to us, on the inefficiency of the then theatrical appointments to represent such important and exciting scenes; and in repelling these attacks, the great philosophic poet has pointed out the true sources of scenic illusion and of dramatic effect, as well as the office and the limits that the imagination should exercise, with a profundity and truth that the metaphysicians have frequently failed to exemplify. The Chorus has most properly been retained, and appears between each scene exalted on a framed platform, in his costume of Time. Mr. Marston recited this sonorous and imaginative verse with his usual appropriate taste; and so far from its being tedious, it was felt, as it doubtless was intended to be, a relief from the din, roar, and conflict of the warlike scenes.

“The play itself affords little scope for acting, though the piercing genius of the author can never fail to imbue, with the most vigorous life and truth, scenes that in any other hands would have been mere connective dialogue. Mr. Phelps, who was the Henry V., did not lighten the heavy dialogue with which the heretofore gay prince commences this play, and the two first acts, it must be said, have too much of the homely in them. When, however, the war really commences, the fiery chivalry of the King breaks forth, and the third and fourth acts abound with spirit-stirring appeals that cannot fail to rouse the enthusiasm of an English audience. In the noble speech beginning ‘Who is it wishes more,’ it is not the mere bloodthirsty instincts of our nature that are appealed to, but the latent and

indomitable daring and energies that make us the monarchs of the billows, and inventors and guides of the fiery steam-engine. It is calling up that spirit of the Saxon-Norman man, which is shown in his unadorned and unornamented chivalry. Indeed, the whole play is intensely national, and exemplifies in the subtlest mode the mixture of the heroic and the homely which characterizes the modern Briton. The whole of the battle scenes exemplify the plainness, and almost simplicity, of the outwardly dull men, who have within so bright and pure a flame of the most chivalric heroism. All this was deeply felt and admirably given by all concerned, and most prominently and markedly by Mr. Phelps, who was eloquent without spouting, and who, when his heroic nature bursts into words, takes care to relapse into his hatred and disgust at such display as soon as he can, by descending to the colloquial and simple as rapidly as possible. This was admirably marked in his scene with Williams, and again to perfection in his wooing of Katharine. This last was as excellent a piece of high comedy as we have seen, and proves how great an artist Mr. Phelps is.

"The great length of the performance and the lateness of the hour prevents our going minutely into the merits of this revival. We can only say that the scenery and machinery are excellent, and highly ingenious. The besieging of Harfleur, in the third act, was admirably and picturesquely managed, and brought down a perfect storm of approbation. And the like may be said of the field and battle of Agincourt, which gave scope for some admirable moonlight and daylight effects. The interiors were equally effective, and the whole reflects the highest credit on the taste, research, and talent of all concerned.

"The play-bill is so crowded with names that it is impossible to notice them all; though it really may be said, from the zeal and care displayed, that all deserve notice. Mrs. Marston's admirable delineation of Mrs. Quickly must, however, have especial notice, for no one remains on the stage to equal her in such parts; and she is quite equal to Mrs. Glover or any of the departed illustrators of such characters. Mr. Bennett's Pistol was forcible, and much admired; but we cannot help wishing this truly clever artist could in some way contrive to conceal his strenuous efforts. Mr. Knight's Bardolph was very good; as was also Mr. Lewis Ball's Fluellen. We cannot, however, particularize further, though Mr. Barrett's Williams deserves especial notice for its sense and truth. The lovers of Shakespeare, however, who still comprise a large proportion of our population, cannot fail to see and judge for themselves, and we are quite sure every one will find himself well rewarded by witnessing this magnificent illustration of one of Shakespeare's most gorgeous plays."

The Lady of Lyons, The Widow of Cornhill, The Hunchback, Othello, Might and Right (a new play), The Gamester, The

Cavalier, As You Like It, William Tell, The Wife, and Richelieu were then played alternately with the new productions until 17th March, 1853, when he produced the Second Part of Henry IV., playing himself The King and Justice Shallow; Barret, Falstaff; and Frederick Robinson, the Prince of Wales.

Of Phelps's great success in the two characters he represented in this last-named play F. G. Tomlins wrote as follows in the *Morning Advertiser*:—

SADLER'S WELLS.

“Last night the manager of this theatre, Mr. Phelps, took his benefit, and we are glad to be able, for the taste of the metropolis, to say that the house was crowded from the ceiling to the floor, and that the respectability and intelligence of the audience were such as to be worthy of the great artist they assembled to compliment. Mr. Phelps was determined on this occasion to show the glory of his art; and possessing the extraordinary versatility requisite for the unprecedented attempt, determined to represent two most opposite characters in the same play; and performed the regal Henry IV. and the fatuous Justice Shallow in the Second Part of Henry IV. Such an attempt, if it comes tardily off, smacks of assurance and imbecility, but if thoroughly performed, shows that the artist is thoroughly master of his art. We are bound to say that, in this instance, it was a complete triumph; the regal and paternal king being as broadly and grandly defined and personated as was the fatuous and senile justice. The step from the grand and energetic Bolingbroke to the paltry-minded Shallow is a wide one, and the two characters may be said each to lie on the extreme confines of human nature. To mark by caricature the strong contrast between the two is within the capacity of a small artist; but to give in its breadth and depth the deep paternal affection, the right royal dignity, and the setting in death of an energetic mind of the largest scope, and in the same hour to delineate the expiring fatuity of a vain, feeble, and petty intellect and character, is an exercise of the histrionic art that is not often witnessed. It shows in its enactor the fullest possession of the one great quality of all others most essential to an actor—the art of personation. It shows that plasticity of imagination which can conceive and represent mankind in all its varied and varying phases, and raises the office of the actor into the highest department of literature and the arts, as the exponent and illustrator of our race and nature.

“The Second Part of Henry IV. is but occasionally performed, although no play abounds more in undeniably Shakespearian matter. The interview between the great dying King and his right royal son is unsurpassed as a dual scene in the whole range of the world's drama—filled as it is with grand and elevated sentiments and reflections, and the profoundest revelations of the paternal feeling. It was listened to by

an overcrowded house with the intensest attention, and left no bosom unmoved by its large and manly pathos.

"Mr. Phelps's delineation was unrivalled, and it is gratifying to know that when performed in the precincts of the very palace where some of its scenes may have actually been enacted, it was acknowledged to be truly royal. We are not disposed to attach to regal criticism any great potency, but if there be a point on which it may be deemed competent to give an opinion, it is upon regal bearing and elevated manners; and we are therefore gratified to know that in these respects Mr. Phelps's performance produced the strongest effect. But all majesty fades before the majesty of such transcendent genius as that of our great dramatist, who seems to delineate human nature in its infinite variety with the ease and power of a superior being.

"To prove the extreme versatility of his talent, Mr. Phelps performed in the farce of *Raising the Wind*, but as this is a mere farcical delineation, we attach no extraordinary merit to it. The play was in other respects admirably performed—Mr. Barrett's *Falstaff* being a very clever performance, as was also Mrs. Marston's *Dame Quickly*. Mr. Robinson was youthful and elegant as the Prince, but nothing more. The rest of the characters and the general arrangements were, as usual, conducted with great taste and care, and the play will doubtless have a run after Easter, until which time the theatre is closed."

"We shall leave the other criticisms which will be found further on to speak for themselves. Suffice it at present to say, it was described by the critics as an unprecedented attempt and marvellously successful. To show his extraordinary powers, some said *Shallow* was the finer of the two, whilst others declared the *King* was; whilst some, like ourselves, averred that one was as fine as the other. It was produced for his own benefit, and played more or less until the end of the season, which closed on 13th April.

1853—1854.

The tenth season commenced on 27th August, 1853, with *Macbeth*, followed by *The School for Scandal*, *Lady of Lyons*, *Virginius*, *The Hypocrite*, *Hamlet*, *Love Makes a Man*, *The Love Chase*, and *Othello*, until 8th October, when he produced Shakespeare's poem of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, playing for the first time the character of *Bottom the Weaver*, on which performance Douglas Jerrold wrote in *Punch* as follows:—



Sincerely yours
Amos Phelps

BULLY BOTTOM.

"Bully Bottom is in truth 'translated' by Mr. Phelps. Translated from matter-of-fact into poetic humour; translated from the commonplace tradition of the play-house to a thing subtly grotesque—rarely, and heroically whimsical. A bully Bottom of the old allowed sort makes up his face—even as the rustic wag of a horse-collar—to goggle and grin, and is as like to the sweet bully of Phelps—bears the same relation in art to the Bottom of Sadler's Wells—as the sign-post portrait on the village green to a head, vital by a few marvellous dots and touches, of Richard Doyle. In these days we know of no such translation! Translate a starveling Welsh curate into a Bishop of London, and Phelps's translation of Bottom the Weaver shall still remain a work of finer art, and—certainly to all humanizing intents of man-solacing humour—of far richer value. We have had, plentiful as French eggs, translations of facile, delicate French, into clumsy, hobbling British; and now, as some amends, we have Bottom translated by Phelps from dull tradition into purest, airiest Shakespeare. Mr. Phelps has not painted, dabbed we should say, the sweet bully with the old player's old hare's foot, but has taken the finest pencil, and, with a clean, sharp, fantastic touch, has rendered Bottom a living weaver—a weaver whose brain is marvellously woven, knitted up, with self-opinion.

"Now this we take to be the true, breathing notion of Shakespeare, and this notion has entered the belief of the actor, and become a living thing. Bottom is of conceit all compact. Conceit flows in his veins—is ever swelling, more or less, in his heart; covers him from scalp to toes, like his skin. And it is this beautiful, this most profitable quality,—this human coin, self-opinion, which, however cracked, and thin, and base, may be put off as the real thing by the unfailing heroism of the utterer,—it is this conceit that saves Bottom from a world of wonderment, when he finds himself the leman dear, clipped by the Queen of Faery. Bottom takes the love—the doting of Titania—as he would take the commanded honey-bag of the red-lipped humble-bee—as something sweet and pleasant, but nought to rave about. He is fortified by his conceit against any surprise of the most bountiful fortune: self-opinion turns fairy treasures into rightful wages. And are there not such Bottoms—not writ upon the paper Athens of the poet, not swaggering in a wood watered of ink-drops—but such sweet bullies in brick-and-mortar London—Bottoms of fortune, that for sport's sake play Puck? The ingenuous Bottom of the play has this distinction from the Bottoms of the real world: he, for the time, wears his ass's head with a difference, that is, he shows the honest length of his ears, and does not, and cannot abate the show of a single hair. His head is outwardly all ass; there is with him no reservation soever.

“Mr. Phelps has the fullest and the deepest sense of the asinine qualities of Bottom from the beginning. For Bottom wants not the ass’s head to mark him ass: the ass is in Bottom, is blood and brain; Puck merely fixes the outward, vulgar type significant of the inward creature. When Bottom, in the first scene, desires to be Wall, and Moonshine, and Lion, his conceit brays aloud, but brays with undeveloped ears. But herein is the *genius* of our actor. The traditional bully Bottom is a dull, stupid, mouthing ass, with no force save in his dullness. Bottom, as played by Mr. Phelps, is an ass with a vehemence, a will, a vigour in his conceit, but still an ass—an ass—that fantastically kicks his heels to the right and left, but still ass—an ass that has the most prolonged variations of his utterance; nevertheless it is braying, and nothing better. And there is great variety in braying. We never heard two asses bray alike. Listen! it may be the season of blossoming hawthorns, and asses salute asses. In very different tones, with very different cadence, will every ass make known the yearning, the aspiration that is within him. We speak not frivolously, ignorantly, on this theme; for in our time we have heard very many asses. And so return we to the Bottom of Merry Islington—to the golden ass of Sadler’s Wells.

“That ass has opened the play-house season of 1853-4 very musically—would we could think hopefully, and with prophetic promise. At present, however, Bottom is the master spirit; and in these days of dramatic *pardonnez-mois*, it is a little comforting—not that we are given to the sanguine mood in things theatrical—to know that folks are found ready to make jocund pilgrimage to Sadler’s Wells, where a man with a real vital love for his art, has now for many seasons made his theatre a school; and more, has never wanted attentive, reverent, grateful scholars. In this Mr. Phelps has been a national school-master; and—far away from the sustaining, fructifying beams of the Court—for hitherto our Elizabeth has not visited *our* Burbage—has popularly taught the lessons left to England by Shakespeare—legacies everlasting as her cliffs.

“As yet Her Majesty has not journeyed to the Wells; but who knows how soon that ‘great fairy’ may travel thither, to do grace to bully Bottom! If so, let Mr. Phelps—if he can—still heighten his manner on his awakening from that dream. Let him—if he can—more subtly mingle wonderment with struggling reason, reason wrestling with wonder to get the better of the mystery.

“‘I have had a dream,—past the wit of man to say what dream it truly was:—Man is but an ass, if he go about to expound this dream. Methought I was—there is no man can tell what. Methought I was, and methought I had.—The eye of man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not seen, man’s hand is not able to taste, his tongue to conceive, nor his heart to report, what my dream was.’

“We do not think it in the wit or power of Mr. Phelps, under any newer inspiration, to give a deeper, finer meaning to this than he has done. But if Her Majesty commands the play, as a loyal subject,

he will doubtless make the essay. In these words, Bottom—as rendered by the actor—is taken away from the ludicrous; he is elevated by the mystery that possesses him, and he affects our more serious sympathies, whilst he forbids our laughter. One of the *very, very* few precious things of the stage—of this starved time—is an ass's head, as worn by the manager of Merrie Islington.

“We hope, at least, the Queen will command that head to be brought—with due solemnity—to Windsor Castle. Let Bottom be made to roar again before Her Majesty, the Prince, the heir-apparent, and all the smaller childhood royalties. Let Bottom be confronted with the picked of the Cabinet—the elect of Privy Councillors. And, as we have orders of Eagles and Elephants, why not the ingenuous out-speaking significance, the order of the Ass? As a timid beginning, we have the Thistle—wherefore not the Ass himself?

“In which case, the order established, the Bottom of Sadler's Wells ought rightfully to be the chancellor thereof.”

The same critic also wrote the following in *Lloyd's Weekly London News*, of which he was the editor:—

THE MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM.

“It has long been a favourite dogma, which commentators have thumped down upon the Shakespearean page with the might of a paviour's hammer, that *The Midsummer Night's Dream* was especially unactable. To listen to these worthies, if you attempted to infuse the spirit of the play into any forms bearing the shape of human bodies, the ethereal essence of it instantly evaporated. It was a fairy creation which could only be acted by fairies; it was a dream of the imagination that admitted of no other play than that of one's imagination. Give it living embodiment, and the fairies become heavy, coarse realities; present the fanciful figures to the eye, and they were changed into pretty tinsel nonentities, only fit at the best to figure in a child's picture-book, or to skip and tumble in one of Mr. Farley's Easter-pieces. The comedy was a poetical dream, and if stage carpenters and painters laid their leaden fingers upon it they would only turn the dream into nothing better than a nightmare. Even Hazlitt himself, with his knowledge of the capabilities of the stage, declared that ‘it was as idle to embody the fancy of it as to personate Wall or Moonshine.’ These critical opinions have all been blown away like so much dust that had got into the volumes in which they are to be found, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is now an acting truth, which may be seen any night at Sadler's Wells Theatre. And yet the beautiful dreaminess of the play is not in the least disturbed. It is dreamland with its curious population of fairies and elvish sprites, whose fantastic outlines the eye can scarcely make out, presented most dreamily before the spectator. There is a misty transparency about

the figures that gives them the appearance of fitting shadows more than of human beings. You fancy you can see the moon shining through them. There they dance and whirl, and are puffed about first from one side and then to another, like a cloud of silver dust; and as the endless atoms of which the cloud is composed keep springing into the air, in one heap of joyous confusion, you may almost imagine, in the dreamy state which the play engenders, that the little fairies are being tossed in a big sheet of the moon, and that Puck is looking on and enjoying the fun. It is a play, in truth, to dream over. The best way to enjoy it is, to half-close your eyes, and to resign yourself completely to the influence of the scene. It is our firm belief, from the hushed stillness that reigns at times through the house, that one-half the spectators are dreaming without knowing it, and that they only wake up when the curtain drops, and are surprised to find they have a play-bill in their hand. This belief is strengthened by the fact of the unusual sparingness of the applause. All motion, all action, seems to be involuntarily suspended. Occasionally a loud laugh bursts out, but it is quickly succeeded by a deep stillness, as of midnight sleep. This feeling is something more than the mere reverence of attention. You would suppose from the silence that closes you in like a dark room, that you were all alone, with your senses far away, wandering you knew not where, but watching intently some strange illusion of a man with an ass's head being kissed by a Fairy Queen. In this way, you dream quite unconsciously, lost one minute in a beautiful wood flooded with moonlight, through which you wade as refreshingly as through a summer stream, and the next minute laughing over the courtship of Pyramus and Thisbe, who are making love, like a couple of servants, over a garden wall. You feel quite disconcerted when you rub your eyes, and discover that there is a chandelier instead of the stars shining above you, and, far from 'blessing' Theseus' house with Oberon and Titania, that you are in Sadler's Wells Theatre, with loud cries of 'Phelps! Phelps!' being hammered on all sides in your startled ears. The illusion is pulled, like a common cotton night-cap, from off your brow; and the ideal trance, in which you have been plunged for the last three hours, is followed by an awakening conviction that you have been fooled during that time not less completely than Bottom himself. You scratch your 'sleek smooth head,' and try to pull your 'fair large ears,' but are delighted to find that they are no longer than what you generally carry about with you; and that, as far as you know, you have no donkey's head upon your shoulders. You have simply had a dream—a dream which, you may almost say with Bottom, 'is past the wit of man to say what dream it truly was:—Man is but an ass, if he go about to expound this dream.' We have often slept in a theatre, but never slept, much less dreamt, so deliciously before, listening eagerly to the beauty of every passing sound, drinking in every enchantment that moved as softly as a fairy's wand before our staring eyes. We can only say that we would sooner dream in this

enchanting way at Sadler's Wells, than remain awake at most other theatres!

"Of the various causes that contributed to the rare excellence of this poetical vision, we cannot speak too highly. First, of the scenery, it was quiet and subdued, as sylvan scenery at night should be. The different views of the wood were deliciously refreshing—just the cool, retired spots that the fairies would delight to dance in, on a warm midsummer's evening. There was no grand effect produced, but everything was natural and simple, and yet beautiful; precisely the impressive simplicity that one meets with in nature. The views, also, were made to melt, dream-like, into one another; and all was done so noiselessly, as though there were a secret feeling in the breasts of all, that the smallest sound would have broken the spirit of the dream. There are not more than three or four scenes in the whole play, and yet so artistically are the different changes of moonlight, fog, and sunrise produced, that you imagine you have been wandering through an entire forest, with a fresh prospect meeting you unexpectedly at every turn. The living figures are so dressed as to harmonize with the scenery, looking as if they were inseparable parts of the same picture; thus, the fairies, as they glide in and out of the trees and foliage, give you a notion that they have actually stepped out of them, as though the trunks and flowers were their natural abiding-places, and, by long residence, they had become imbued with the colour of them. They were none of your winged, white muslin fairies with spangles and butterfly wands, but were real, intangible, shadowy beings that you made sure would, under no pretence, remain out beyond a certain hour, but would infallibly at the first cockerow all melt into thin air. Of the acting, the lion's share, though his request to play the *lion* was refused, must be given to bully Bottom. So prominent is this character made by Phelps, that it stands out like the real centre of the piece, round which all the other characters, elves, kings, clowns and all, seem to revolve. We never saw Liston in the same part, when he played it at Covent Garden, but we are confident that in his hands even, it could not have been more consistently comic, more free from caricature, or more full of absurd humour than it was rendered by Phelps. It is a finished work of art that entitles the creator of it to take his stand henceforth, like a second Garrick, between Comedy and Tragedy. All our comic actors should make a point of seeing this delicate and elaborate performance, to study how laughter may be produced without buffoonery, and to learn how great an effect may be created simply by taking a correct view of an author's conception. They cannot do better than to take a few lessons in this way of Mr. Phelps, who, not content with being the first tragedian of the day, seems resolved to prove himself also the first comedian. The *Midsummer Night's Dream* is the great dramatic fact of this year, which every one must see."

John A. Heraud wrote the following in the *Athenæum* :—

SADLER'S WELLS.

“ On Saturday this management produced its new revival—The Midsummer Night's Dream. With a vivid recollection of the manner in which Madame Vestris mounted this charming poem during her management at Covent Garden, we carried to the suburban theatre a high standard by which to test the new spectacular illustrations. We can conscientiously record, that we had reason nevertheless to be greatly pleased with the amount of excellence displayed. The faëry glitter, the elfish sportiveness, the classical sternness, the comic eccentricity, and the amorous perplexity, were all well provided for. The frolic Puck was cleverly represented by young Mr. Artis; who had, it was evident, been elaborately drilled for the occasion,—and gave an amount of grotesque action which, though exuberant, was not unpleasing. The Helena of Miss Cooper was very good, more than once rising into a pathetic utterance that, amidst the wildness of the general accessories, moved the heart with a touch of reality,—lending a delightful natural interest to fantastic adventure, and redeeming the improbability of the situation. Miss Travers in Hermia was respectable. Oberon and Titania were attempted by Miss Hickson and Miss Wyatt;—the latter showing some power,—and the former considerable grace. But the distinguishing feature of the revival was the assumption of the part of Bottom by Mr. Phelps. In such eccentric creations Mr. Phelps has already been as happy as he has been original; and in the present one he has exerted all his invention and skill. The nervous character of the weaver, with the angularity of his movements, particularly those of his arms and legs,—ever ready to do anything, and giving to all expressions an equal emphasis, as the result of an ever-active and highly stimulated temperament,—eternally gesticulating, and overflowing with self-importance,—these accidents and attributes of disposition and occupation were seized on by the actor with great judgment and actualized with corresponding skill. The ass's head which he is doomed to wear turned out to be a machine well contrived for expression,—the ears and jaws being capable of appropriate gesture, provocative of laughter. When relieved from this skull cap, and endeavouring to recollect his dream, Bottom in the hands of Mr. Phelps became a remarkable artistic presentment. His perplexity, as he endeavoured to retrace his vision, was elaborately delineated; and this was succeeded by some admirable by-play, in which, without a word spoken, the pantomimic action was suggestive of an entire soliloquy concerning the mysterious loss of the long ears and beard so recently worn. As he makes his exit, we see clearly enough that Bottom gives up the whole as an insoluble problem. Then comes the incident of the mock play,—which was presented in all its integrity; the result being, a complete justification of the poet, and a most amusing piece of stage-foolery. Mr. Marston delivered his part of

Theseus with great propriety, the poetical speeches being picked out with care and set with effect. The scenery, by Mr. Fenton, was throughout beautiful, and much of the grouping was highly picturesque."

Professor Morley also wrote as follows in the *Examiner*:—

"Every reader of Shakespeare is disposed to regard *The Midsummer Night's Dream* as the most essentially unactable of all his plays. It is a dramatic poem of the utmost grace and delicacy; its characters are creatures of the poet's fancy that no flesh and blood can properly present—fairies who 'creep into acorn-cups,' or mortals who are but dim abstractions, persons of a dream. The words they speak are so completely spiritual that they are best felt when they are not spoken. Their exquisite beauty is like that of sunset colours which no mortal artist can interpret faithfully. The device of the clowns in the play to present Moonshine seems but a fair expression of the kind of success that might be achieved by the best actors who should attempt to present *The Midsummer Night's Dream* on the stage. It was, therefore, properly avoided by managers as lying beside and above their art; nor was there reason to be disappointed, when the play some years ago furnished Madame Vestris with a spectacle that altogether wanted the Shakespearean spirit.

"In some measure there is reason for a different opinion on these matters in *The Midsummer Night's Dream* as produced at Sadler's Wells by Mr. Phelps. Though stage fairies cannot ride on bluebells, and the members of no theatrical company now in existence can speak such poetry as that of *The Midsummer Night's Dream* otherwise than most imperfectly, yet it is proved that there remains in the power of the manager who goes with pure taste and right feeling to his work, enough for the establishment of this play as a most charming entertainment of the stage.

"Mr. Phelps has never for a minute lost sight of the main idea which governs the whole play, and this is the great secret of his success in the presentation of it. He knew that he was to present merely shadows; that spectators, as Puck reminds them in the epilogue, are to think they have slumbered on their seats, and that what appeared before them have been visions. Everything has been subdued as far as possible at Sadler's Wells to this ruling idea. The scenery is very beautiful, but wholly free from the meretricious glitter now in favour; it is not so remarkable for costliness as the pure taste in which it and all the stage arrangements have been planned. There is no ordinary scene-shifting; but, as in dreams, one scene is made to glide insensibly into another. We follow the lovers and the fairies through the wood from glade to glade, now among trees, now with a broad view of the sea and Athens in the distance, carefully but not at all obtrusively set forth. And not only do the scenes melt dream-like one into another, but over all the fairy portion of the play there is a

haze thrown by a curtain of green gauze placed between the actors and the audience, and maintained there during the whole of the second, third, and fourth acts. This gauze curtain is so well spread that there are very few parts of the house from which its presence can be detected, but its influence is everywhere felt; it subdues the flesh and blood of the actors into something more nearly resembling dream-figures, and incorporates more completely the actors with the scenes, throwing the same green fairy tinge, and the same mist, over all. A like idea has also dictated certain contrivances of dress, especially in the case of the fairies. Very good taste has been shown in the establishment of a harmony between the scenery and the poem.

“The main feature—the midsummer night—was marked by one scene so elaborated as to impress it upon all as the central picture of the group. The moon was just so much exaggerated as to give it the required prominence. The change, again, of this midsummer night into morning, when Theseus and Hippolyta come to the wood with horn and hound, was exquisitely presented. And in the last scene, when the fairies, coming at night into the hall of Theseus, ‘each several chamber bless,’ the midsummer moon is again seen shining on the palace as the curtains are drawn that admit the fairy throng. Ten times as much money might have been spent on a very much worse setting of *The Midsummer Night’s Dream*. It is the poetical feeling prompting a judicious but not extravagant outlay, by aid of which Mr. Phelps has produced a stage spectacle more refined and intellectual, and far more absolutely satisfactory, than anything I can remember to have seen since Mr. Macready was a manager. That the flesh-and-blood presentments of the dream-figures which constitute the persons of the play should be always in harmony with this true feeling, was scarcely to be expected. A great deal of the poetry is injured in the speaking. Unless each actor were a man who combined with elocutionary power a very high degree of sensibility and genius, it could hardly be otherwise. Yet it cannot be said even here that the poet’s effects entirely failed. *The Midsummer Night’s Dream* abounds in the most delicate passages of Shakespeare’s verse. The Sadler’s Wells pit has a keen enjoyment for them; and pit and gallery were crowded to the farthest wall on Saturday night with a most earnest audience, among whom many a subdued hush arose, not during, but just before, the delivery of the most charming passages. If the crowd at Drury Lane is a gross discredit to the public taste, the crowd at Sadler’s Wells more than neutralizes any ill opinion that may on that score be formed of play-goers. The Sadler’s Wells gallery, indeed, appeared to be not wholly unconscious of the contrast, for when Bottom volunteered to roar high or roar low, a voice from the gallery desired to know whether he could ‘roar like Brooke.’ Even the gallery at this theatre, however, resents an interruption, and the unexpected sally was not well received. A remarkably quick-witted little boy, Master F. Artis, plays Puck, and really plays it with faithfulness and spirit as it has been conceived for him by Mr. Phelps. His training has

evidently been most elaborate. We see at once that his acts and gestures are too perfect and mature to be his own imaginings, but he has been quick-witted enough to adopt them as his own, and give them not a little of the charm of independent and spontaneous production. By this thoughtfulness there is secured for the character on the stage something of the same prominence that it has in the mind of closet readers of the play.

"Of Miss Cooper's Helena we cannot honestly say very much. In that, as in most of the other characters, the spirit of the play was missed, because the arguing and quarrelling and blundering that should have been playful, dream-like, and poetical, was much too loud and real. The men and women could not fancy themselves shadows. Were it possible so far to subdue the energy of the whole body of actors as to soften the tone of the scenes between Theseus, Hippolyta, Lysander, Demetrius, Hermia, and Helena, the latter character even on the stage might surely have something of the effect intended by the poem. It is an exquisite abstraction, a pitiful and moving picture of a gentle maid forlorn, playfully developed as befits the fantastic texture of the poem, but not at all meant to excite mirth; and there was a very great mistake made when the dream was so worked out into hard literalness as to create constant laughter during the scenes in which Helena, bewildered by the change of mood among the lovers, shrinks and complains 'Wherefore was I to this keen mockery born?' The merriment which Shakespeare connected with those scenes was but a little of the poet's sunlight meant to glitter among tears.

"It remains for us only to speak of the success of Mr. Phelps as Bottom, whom he presented from the first with remarkable subtlety and spirit, as a man seen in a dream. In his first scene, before we know what his conception is, or in what spirit he means the whole play to be received, we are puzzled by it. We miss the humour, and we get a strange, elaborate, and uncouth dream-figure, a clown restless with vanity, marked by a score of little movements, and speaking ponderously with the uncouth gesticulation of an unreal thing, a grotesque nightmare character. But that, we find, is precisely what the actor intended to present, and we soon perceive that he was right. Throughout the fairy scenes there is a mist thrown over Bottom by the actor's art. The violent gesticulations become stillness, and the hands are fixed on the breast. They are busy with unperceived business of managing the movements of the ass's head, but it is not for that reason they are so perfectly still. The change of manner is a part of the conception. The dream-figure is dreaming, there is dream within dream; Bottom is quiet; his humour becomes more unctuous, but Bottom is translated. He accepts all that happens, quietly as dreamers do; and the ass's head we also accept quietly, for we too are in the middle of our dream, and it does not create surprise. Not a touch of comedy was missed in this capital piece of acting, yet Bottom was completely incorporated with *The Midsummer Night's Dream*, made

an essential part of it, as unsubstantial, as airy and refined as all the rest. Quite masterly was the delivery by Mr. Phelps of the speech of Bottom on awakening. He was still a man subdued, but subdued by the sudden plunge into a state of an unfathomable wonder. His dream clings about him, he cannot sever the real from the unreal, and still we are made to feel that his reality itself is but a fiction. The pre-occupation continues to be manifest during his next scene with the players, and his parting, 'No more words; away; go, away,' was in the tone of a man who had lived with spirits and was not yet perfectly returned into the flesh. Nor did the refinement of this conception, if we except the first scene, abate a jot of the laughter that the character of Bottom was intended to excite. The mock play at the end was intensely ludicrous in the presentment, yet nowhere farcical. It was the dream. Bottom as Pyramus was more perfectly a dream-figure than ever. The contrast between the shadowy actor and his part, between Bottom and Pyramus, was marked intensely; and the result was as quaint a phantom as could easily be figured by real flesh. Mr. Ray's Quince was very good indeed, and all the other clowns were reasonably well presented.

"It is very doubtful whether *The Midsummer Night's Dream* has yet, since it was first written, been put upon the stage with so nice an interpretation of its meaning. It is pleasant beyond measure to think that an entertainment so refined can draw such a throng of play-goers as I saw last Saturday sitting before it silent and reverent at Sadler's Wells."

On 21st November Henry V. was again acted, followed further on by *A Fatal Dowry*, *Othello*, *The Man of the World*, and *Hamlet*, to the end of the year. Eighteen hundred and fifty-four commenced with *A Fatal Dowry*, followed during January by *The Merchant of Venice*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *Hamlet*; February, *The School for Scandal*, *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *London Assurance*, and *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*. On 2nd March he played *The Miser*, and *Rover in Wild Oats*, for his own benefit, and during the month he played *Rover*, *Hamlet*, *The Miser*, *The Man of the World*, *Othello*, *Old Dornton*, *Luke*, *Reuben Glenroy*, *Shylock*, and the *Duke Aranza*; and in April some of the foregoing, *Leon in Rule a Wife and Have a Wife*, and *Othello*, playing this character on the last night of the season.

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The eleventh season commenced in August with *The Provost of Bruges*, and during that month and September that play and the following were performed: *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Cymbeline*, *Henry VIII.*, *The Jealous Wife*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and *Hamlet*. In October, *Richelieu*, *Othello*, *Road to Ruin*, *Hamlet*, and *The Man of the World*.

On the 14th October he produced *Pericles, Prince of Tyre* (which had not been acted for nearly two centuries), with great splendour and crowning success. We must again let the critics speak. The first review of the play appeared in the *Examiner*, and was written by Professor Morley:—

“*Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, that Eastern romance upon which Shakespeare first tried his power as a dramatist, and which he may have readapted to the stage even while yet a youth at Stratford, has been produced at Sadler’s Wells by Mr. Phelps, with the care due to a work especially of interest to all students of Shakespeare, and with the splendour proper to an Eastern spectacle. The story was an old one; there is a version of it even in Anglo-Saxon. Gower had made it the longest story in his *Confessio Amantis*, and the one told with the greatest care; and the dramatist in using it made use of Gower. The story was a popular one of an Eastern Prince whose life is spent upon a sea of trouble. Everywhere he is pursued by misfortune. He seeks a beautiful wife at the risk of death, through the good old Eastern plan of earning her by answering a riddle. She proves a miracle of lust. He flies from her, and is pursued by the strong wrath of her father. To avoid this he is forced to become an exile from his house and people. He sails to Tharsus, where he brings liberal relief to a great famine, and is hailed as a saviour; but to Tharsus he is pursued by warnings of the coming wrath of his great enemy. Again he becomes a fugitive across the sea. The sea is pitiless, and tosses him from coast to coast, until it throws him ashore, the only man saved from the wreck of his vessel, near Pentapolis. But in Pentapolis reigns a good king, whose daughter—still in the true fashion of a story-book—is to be courted by a tourney between rival princes. *Pericles* would take part in such ambition, and the sea casts him up a suit of armour. He strives, and is victor. He excels all in the tourney, in the song, and in the dance; the king is generous, and the daughter kind. But the shadow of his evil fate is still over *Pericles*. He distrusts a thing so strange as happy fortune, and thinks of it only as ‘the king’s subtlety to have my life. Fortune is, however, for once really on his side. He marries the Princess *Thaisa*, and being

afterwards informed that his great enemy is dead, and that his own subjects rebel against his continued absence, he sets sail with her for Tyre. The good gifts seem, however, only to have been granted by Fortune, that she might increase his wretchedness tenfold by taking them away. The sea again 'washes heaven and hell' when his ship is fairly launched upon it, and in a storm so terrible that

'The seaman's whistle
Is as a whisper in the ears of death,
Unheard,'

the nurse brings on deck to Pericles a new-born infant, with the tidings that its mother, Thaisa, is dead. The sailors, believing that a corpse on board maintains the storm about the ship, demand that the dead queen be thrown into the sea. 'Most wretched queen!' mourns the more wretched prince—

'A terrible child-bed hast thou had, my dear ;
No light, no fire : the unfriendly elements
Forgot thee utterly ; nor have I time
To give thee hallow'd to thy grave, but straight
Must cast thee, scarcely coffin'd, in the ooze ;
Where, for a monument upon thy bones,
And aye-remaining lamps, the belching whale
And humming water must o'erwhelm thy corse,
Lying with simple shells,'

Being at this time near Tharsus, however, and remembering that Tharsus owes him a debt of gratitude, Pericles makes for Tharsus, in order that he may place his infant, with the least possible delay, upon sure ground, and under tender nursing. The daughter there grows up under her father's evil star. 'This world to me,' she says, 'is like a lasting storm, whirring me from my friends.' The Queen of Tharsus becomes jealous, and resolves to murder her. It is by the sea-shore that the deed is to be done. When Pericles comes for his child her tomb is shown to him, and under this last woe his mind breaks down. He puts to sea again with his wrecked spirit, and though the sea again afflicts him with its storms, he rides them out. I have not told the story thus far for the sake of telling it, but for the sake of showing in the most convenient way what is really the true spirit of the play. At this point of the tale the fortune of Pericles suddenly changes. A storm of unexpected happiness breaks with immense force upon him. The sea and the tomb seem to give up their dead, and from the lowest depths of prostration the spirit of the prince is exalted to the topmost height, in scenes which form most worthily the climax of the drama. 'O Helicanus,' he then cries,

'O Helicanus, strike me, honour'd sir ;
Give me a gash, put me to present pain ;
Lest this great sea of joys rushing upon me,
O'erbear the shores of my mortality,
And drown me with their sweetness.'

“ In telling such a story as this, Shakespeare felt, and, young as he may have been, his judgment decided rightly, that it should be shown distinctly as a tale, such as

‘ Hath been sung at festivals,
On ember eves and holy-ales ;’

and he therefore brought forward Gower himself, very much in the character of an Eastern story-teller, to begin the narrative and carry it on to the end, subject to the large interruption of five acts of dramatic illustration. A tale was being told ; every person was to feel *that*, although much of it would be told to the eye. But in the revival of the play Mr. Phelps was left to choose between two difficulties. The omission of Gower would be a loss to the play, in an artistic sense, yet the introduction of Gower before every act would very probably endanger its effect in a theatrical sense, unless the part were spoken by an actor of unusual power. The former plan was taken ; and in adding to certain scenes in the drama passages of his own writing, strictly confined to the explanation of those parts of the story which Shakespeare represents Gower as narrating between the acts, Mr. Phelps may have used his best judgment as a manager. Certainly, unless he could have been himself the Gower as well as the Pericles of the piece, the frequent introduction of a story-telling gentleman in a long coat and curls, would have been an extremely hazardous experiment, even before such an earnest audience as that at Sadler’s Wells.

“ The change did inevitably, to a certain extent, disturb the poetical effect of the story ; but assuming its necessity, it was effected modestly and well. The other changes also were in no case superfluous, and were made with considerable judgment. The two scenes at Mitylene, which present Marina pure as an ermine which no filth can touch, were compressed into one ; and although the plot of the drama was not compromised by a false delicacy, there remained not a syllable at which true delicacy could have conceived offence. The calling of Boult and his mistress was covered in the pure language of Marina with so hearty a contempt, that the scene was really one in which the purest minds might be those which would take the most especial pleasure. The conception of the character of Pericles by Mr. Phelps seemed to accord exactly with the view just taken of the play. He was the Prince pursued by evil fate. A melancholy that could not be shaken off oppressed him, even in the midst of the gay court of King Simonides, and the hand of Thaisa was received with only the rapture of a love that dared not feel assured of its good fortune. Mr. Phelps represented the Prince sinking gradually under the successive blows of fate, with an unostentatious truthfulness ; but in that one scene which calls forth all the strength of the artist, the recognition of Marina and the sudden lifting of the Prince’s bruised and fallen spirit to an ecstasy of joy, there was an opportunity for one of the most effective displays of the power of an actor that the stage, as it now is, affords. With immense energy, yet with a true feeling for the pathos of the situation

that had the most genuine effect, Mr. Phelps achieved in this passage a triumph marked by plaudit after plaudit. They do not applaud rant at Sadler's Wells. The scene was presented truly by the actor, and felt fully by his audience. The youthful voice and person, and the quiet acting of Miss Edith Heraud, who made her *début* as Marina, greatly helped to set forth the beauty of that scene. The other parts had also been judiciously allotted, so that each actor did what he or she was best able to do, and did it up to the full measure of the ability of each. Miss Cooper gave much effect to the scene of the recovery of Thaisa, which was not less well felt by those who provided the appointments of the stage, and who marked that portion of the drama by many delicacies of detail. Of the scenery, indeed, it is to be said, that so much splendour of decoration is rarely governed by so pure a taste. The play, of which the text is instability of fortune, has its characteristic place of action on the sea. Pericles is perpetually shown (literally as well as metaphorically) tempest-tost, or in the immediate vicinity of the treacherous waters; and this idea is most happily enforced at Sadler's Wells by scene-painter and machinist. They reproduce the rolling of the billows and the whistling of the winds when Pericles lies senseless, a wrecked man on a shore. When he is shown on board ship in the storm during the birth of Marina, the ship tosses vigorously. When he sails at last to the temple of Diana of the Ephesians, rowers take their places on their banks, the vessel seems to glide along the coast, an admirably painted panorama slides before the eye, and the whole theatre seems to be in the course of actual transportation to the temple at Ephesus, which is the crowning scenic glory of the play. The dresses, too, are brilliant. As befits an Eastern story, the events all pass among princes. Now the spectator has a scene presented to him occupied by characters who appear to have stepped out of a Greek vase; and presently he looks into an Assyrian palace and sees figures that have come to life and colour from the stones of Nineveh. There are noble banquets and glittering processions, and in the banquet-hall of King Simonides there is a dance which is a marvel of glitter, combinations of colour, and quaint picturesque effect. There are splendid trains of courtiers, there are shining rows of Vestal virgins, and there is Diana herself in the sky. We are told that the play of Pericles enjoyed for its own sake, when it first appeared, a run of popularity that excited the surprise and envy of some playwrights, and became almost proverbial. It ceased to be acted in the days of Queen Anne, and whether it would attract now as a mere acted play, in spite of the slight put upon it by our fathers and grandfathers, it is impossible to say, since the Pericles of Sadler's Wells may be said to succeed only because it is a spectacle."

The second criticism was written by Douglas Jerrold, and the third by John Oxenford, and appeared respectively in *Lloyd's Weekly London News* and the *Times* as follows:—

PERICLES AT SADLER'S WELLS.

"Mr. Phelps has just paid his annual tribute of admiration to the genius of Shakespeare. The tribute may not, perhaps, be so grand as that paid on previous years, but still it is graced with so much beauty and refined taste as to make one forget the somewhat inferior value of the gift in the very superior workmanship that adorns it. You are not so much dazzled by the lavish amount of wealth as charmed by the patient, enriching skill that, out of poor materials, has constructed an elaborate work of art. You can trace the hand of a master in the smallest details, and delight in admiring the extreme delicacy with which the grossness of the original has been either removed, or else tenderly softened down, without in the least disturbing or weakening the general effect of the design. The fourth act, so dangerous to represent, has been disinfected of its impurities in a manner that would win the praise of the most fastidious member of the most moral Board of Health that ever held its sittings within the camphored precincts of Exeter Hall. The greatest theatrical purist need not be afraid to visit that foul room at Mitylene, since it has been white-washed and purified by the pen of Mr. Phelps. As for the grace and grandeur with which the whole play has been made visible to the eye, we recommend all who love to see their poetical dreams realized to pay Sadler's Wells a visit with the full certainty of deriving from it a pleasure, pure and classical, such as their quickened imaginations could possibly have formed no conception of. Many managers spend more money, probably, than Mr. Phelps on their Shakspearean productions, but none of them know how to spend their money so well. With the former it is the vulgar display of a rich *parvenu*, who spreads his gold and silver over every little object; with the latter, it is the educated judgment of an artist, who, knowing what to decorate, gets the greatest effects out of the smallest means. Mr. Phelps never fails in opening his academy for Shakespeare, nor in exhibiting a new picture, every year. If the one now before the town is deficient as compared with its predecessors in the choice of subject, it is fully equal to any one of them in its gorgeous and artistic treatment, that is in every respect worthy of the proud gallery of which it now forms part. The only figure omitted in the picture is the poet Gower, who appears in the original play as a kind of Chorus, whose duty it is to connect one act with another, throwing down a series of suspension-bridges, by means of which the reader is carried over the several large gaps in the story. The interest, however, would not be much increased by his presence. Pericles cannot be called an acting play, perfect in all its relations; and no explanations spoken at the commencement of each act, like the headings put at the beginning of every chapter in a book, could possibly bind it into consistency, or anything like symmetrical union. It is a rapid series of disconnected incidents, a long panorama of

rambling adventures, following one another without any proper order of succession, and any one or two of which could well be taken away without serious detriment to the remainder. It is a play, as rendered by Mr. Phelps, more to be seen than heard—a Shakespearean play, in which the painting for once has got the master-hand of the poetry. What little interest there is does not commence till the fourth act, and the only effective situation is to be found in the last scene but one, where Pericles recovers his daughter. Every justice is done to this situation by Mr. Phelps, who acts with wonderful strength and feeling, as if he had reserved all his powers, and concentrated them into that one effort. Miss Heraud played the part of his daughter Marina with great simplicity and sweetness, and owing to her grace and dignity the most dangerous scene of the play went off with the greatest applause. She has achieved a success in a most difficult part that experienced actresses would scarcely have been blamed if they had failed in. Of the scenic wonders, we cannot pretend to give the smallest catalogue. Ruskin, who is so rarely pleased to be pleased when others are pleased, might, without damaging his well-won renown for fastidiousness, expatiate with a glow worthy of one of Turner's pictures on their many beauties, and publish a pamphlet expressly to immortalize the name of Fenton, who is the happy scene-painter on this occasion. The rare perfection, generally so admired in all productions of the great Bard to whose memory the lessee has already dedicated so many beautiful acts of worship, has been nobly maintained, if not surpassed, in this instance; and Pericles, with its rolling sea and tossing ship, its Tyrian galley, and various marvels of poetic scenery and costume, will be the dramatic town-talk for several weeks to come. Mr. Phelps is the best commentator of Shakespeare the people ever had—a commentator that, instead of obscuring the text, as commentators generally do, throws a new light upon it. Islington should be not a little proud of the constant opportunity of reading Shakespeare by such a light!

“It is the custom at Sadler's Wells to distinguish every season by some dramatic curiosity that shall be talked about all over London. Sometimes the wonder put forward is a well-known play, fitted up with a novel style of decoration; sometimes it is a long-forgotten work, familiar to none but students of old literature, and startling to a general public, as a strange phantom sprung from an ancient sepulchre. The curiosity of this present season is a greater curiosity than any that has preceded, being neither more nor less than the play of Pericles, Prince of Tyre, which will be found in all modern editions of Shakespeare's works. In the Elizabethan days this play was so popular that the prologue to the old comedy of *The Hog hath Lost his Pearl* concludes with the lines :—

‘And if it prove so happy as to please,
We'll say 'tis fortunate, like Pericles.’

“This expression, as a commentator suggests, might have been intended as a sneer, but it is evidence that the play was thought lucky, if not deserving, and a passage from Ben Jonson’s ode, ‘Come, leave the loathed stage,’ shows that that stern dramatist found an instance of the bad taste of his time in the success of a ‘mouldy tale like *Pericles*.’ Somewhere about 1660, when a bookseller named Rhodes obtained a licence for acting prior to the date of Killigrew’s and D’Avenant’s patents, *Pericles* was one of the plays chosen for performance, and the principal character is said to have been one of Betterton’s best parts. From that time, we believe, the play, as a whole, has remained on the shelf, though George Lillo, the author of *George Barnwell*, worked up the latter portion of the story into a three-act play, called *Marina*, which was produced at Covent Garden in 1738. These facts of ancient fame and subsequent neglect are enough to settle the point that *Pericles* is a ‘curiosity.’

“But *Pericles* is also a curiosity as a source of literary discussion, for it is one of those plays that give cause to a very ‘pretty quarrel’ among commentators as to whether Shakespeare wrote it or not. Evidence extrinsic and intrinsic has been largely adduced, and while, on the one hand, the whole work has been deemed unworthy of Shakespeare, certain passages, on the other hand, have been thought to bear the Shakespearean stamp. We would refer those who like discussions of the sort to the ‘Notice on the Authenticity of *Pericles*’ contained in Mr. Charles Knight’s edition of Shakespeare, and here content ourselves with stating the conclusion at which that gentleman arrives—namely, that the work was probably a production of Shakespeare’s earliest youth, and was afterwards touched up by him in years of maturity.

“One thing must be evident to all who read the play without prejudice—that, whether it is the work of the individual Shakespeare or not, it is no exponent of the mind to which we owe the great monuments of our national dramatic literature. The curious in comparison may, if they please, on the assumption that *Pericles* is a juvenile work, find in it faint indications of characters afterwards brought into strong relief. *Dionyza* may be considered a feeble germ of *Lady Macbeth*; *Marina* may suggest a thought of *Imogen*; the reappearance of *Thaisa* may recall to mind the reappearance of *Hermione*. However, such comparisons, though they may be very interesting as psychological studies, do not affect the value of *Pericles* as a specimen of a dramatic art. In itself it is a work utterly without developed character, and utterly without dramatic unity. To call it an indifferent drama would be a mistake as well as an injustice; it is, really, not a drama at all. It belongs to a numerous class of primitive works, the author of which has thought it quite enough if, without regard to dramatic concentration, dramatic purpose, or even dramatic effect, he takes up a popular tale and distributes the personages that figure in it among a company of actors. At a time when reading was not so universal as it is now, and the theatre not only answered the

exigencies of the theatrically inclined, but also performed the functions of the novel and the magazine, it is easy to understand that a mixed audience, without the word '*blasé*' in their vocabulary, might listen with pleasure to a tale full of adventures, rather told than acted by the actors, just as a crowd of Arabs will assemble round the purveyor of Oriental fiction. The story of Apollonius, Prince of Tyre, narrated by Gower in his *Confessio Amantis*, and otherwise circulated, would, with an audience of this unsophisticated kind, answer the purpose fully as well as any other, for a series of hairbreadth escapes and strange vicissitudes was all that was required.

"In such means of excitement the play of Pericles, which is based on the story of Apollonius, is most abundant. Pericles (perhaps a corruption of Pyrocles, for he has nothing to do with the great Athenian) is a Prince of Tyre, come to Antioch for the purpose of wooing the king's daughter. Like *Cedipus*, he has to solve a riddle, and lose his life in case of failure, while a skilful solution will entitle him to the hand of the Princess. His ingenuity triumphs over the enigma, but at the same time discovers an incestuous affair that induces him to leave Antioch with abhorrence, and to return to Tyre. Fearing, however, the vengeance of Antiochus, he again sets sail and comes to Tharsus, where he finds the people perishing with famine, and supplies them with corn. Wrecked after leaving Tharsus, he is cast on the shore of '*Pentapolis*,' and, as his armour is cast ashore also, he is enabled to take part in a tournament, at which he gains the hand of the king's daughter, Thaisa. The death of Antiochus allows him to return homewards with his wife, who apparently dies on board the ship while giving birth to a child, and is thrown overboard in a chest to allay the superstitious fears of the sailors, who ascribe the fury of a storm to the presence of a corpse on board. The chest that contains Thaisa is thrown on the coast at Ephesus, and the lady, restored to life by Cerimon, a good old lord, becomes a priestess of Diana. In the meanwhile Pericles has left his infant daughter Marina with the Governor of Tharsus, whom he had formerly obliged by his bounty. Fifteen years elapse; and Marina, so named from her birth at sea, is now the heroine of the tale. Dionyza, the wife of Cleon, the Governor, is jealous of the superiority of Marina to her own daughter, and commissions an assassin to murder her. Her life is saved by some pirates, who carry her off in their ship, and sell her to the keeper of a house of infamy at Mitylene. Here she not only resists all temptation, but actually converts the visitors of the establishment, including Lysimachus, the Governor of Mitylene, to a virtuous course of life. At this juncture Pericles, sick at heart with his losses, happens to arrive at Mitylene, where it is thought that the musical talent of Marina will recreate his weary mind. She is invited on board his vessel, a recognition takes place, and the goddess Diana, in a vision, exhorts him to go to Ephesus, where he finds his wife also.

"Such a mere story, devoid of every element that can constitute a

dramatic work—for the most elaborated scenes, those which take place at Mitylene, are too gross for representation, save in a most attenuated form—could not interest any audience of the present day as a mere play. But in the hands of Mr. Phelps it assumes a value not its own; for the variety of countries which are visited by the hero affords an excellent opportunity for variety of scenic effect. As the old audience of *Pericles* took delight in a succession of adventures, artificially set forth, so may a modern audience take delight in a succession of brilliant decorations.

“Certainly, as a spectacle, the play of *Pericles*, as produced at Sadler’s Wells, is a marvel. Not a single opportunity is missed for hanging on a wondrous picture or group that shall hide the paucity of dramatic interest. When *Pericles* is thrown on the sands, it is with the very best of rolling seas, the waves advancing and receding as when governed by Mr. Macready, in *Acis and Galatea*, at Drury Lane. In the palace of Pentapolis he finds costumes of a kind with which we have been familiarized by *Sardanapalus*, at the Princess’s. When the storm afterwards rocks his vessel, it rocks in real earnest, and spectators of delicate stomachs may have uneasy reminiscences of Folkestone and Boulogne. But all this is as nothing to the wonders that take place when *Pericles* has discovered his daughter, and sets off for Ephesus. An admirably equipped Diana, with her car in the clouds, orders his course to her sacred city, to which he is conducted by a moving panorama of excellently-painted coast scenery. The interior of the temple, where the colossal figure of the many-breasted goddess stands in all its glory amid gorgeously-attired votaries, is the last ‘bang’ of the general magnificence.

“It is on the scenery and costume that the piece depends, for the personages in general do little else than walk on and walk off the stage, without betraying or exciting an emotion. But there is one touch of acting on the part of Mr. Phelps which is too admirable to be passed over. This is the manner in which he portrays the feelings of the father while gradually recognizing his daughter, in the fifth act. Grief has rendered him almost incapable of hope, and, unwilling to believe the unaccustomed approach of joy, he looks at his child with fixed eye and haggard cheek, gasping with anxiety, till doubt at last gives way to certainty, and he falls weeping on the neck of Marina. This scene was the only opportunity for acting throughout the piece, and Mr. Phelps availed himself of it most felicitously. The part of Marina was sustained in an artless manner by Miss Edith Heraud, who made her *début* on the occasion, though the part has lost much of its significance by the necessary omission of the bestialities in the fourth act.

“A loud call for Mr. Phelps, and another loud call for Mr. Fenton, the scene-painter, followed the hurricane of applause which a crowded audience awarded to the resuscitation of *Pericles* on Saturday night.”

Nothing else new was produced during this season, which was brought to a close at the end of March, except *Rob Roy* for Mr. Phelps's benefit on 14th of that month, when he played with great success Mackay's great part of the *Bailie Nicol Jarvie* for the first time. The other plays acted during the season were *The Rivals*, in which he acted *Sir Anthony Absolute*, *Richelieu*, *The School for Scandal*, in which he was *Sir Peter Teazle*, *Douglas*, *Werner*, *Othello*, *The Stranger*, *A Winter's Tale*, *The Bridal*, *Hamlet*, and *Macbeth*.

1855—1856.

The twelfth season commenced the 8th September, 1855, with *The Hunchback*, in which he appeared for the first time for very many years, but in which he frequently appeared afterwards. His performance and conception of this character was different from that of any other actor that had appeared in it. He showed an immense deal of fine dry humour in *The Hunchback*, which every one else seemed to have overlooked. He also brought out the fine pathos and ruggedness which he saw in it in certain scenes with a force peculiarly his own. The piece was very successful. Mr. Macready came with Mr. Forster to see him in this character, and wrote him a letter the next day highly complimenting him on his performance, saying it was the only theatre he had put his foot in since his retirement, and he would have been delighted to have shaken him by the hand, but dared not trust himself again behind the scenes.*

Then followed in September and October *Rob Roy*, *Virginius*, *The Tempest*, *The Lady of Lyons*, *Hamlet*, *The Wife*, and a new play called *Hamilton of Bothwellhaugh*, produced on 24th of the latter month. This last was acted every night until 8th November, when he produced *The Comedy of Errors*, which was acted with the new play, *Othello*, *The Hunchback*, *The*

* This letter, which I read at the time, was not preserved by him, as were others which will appear at the end of this volume, principally I suspect because it accused some of the daily Press in good plain terms of neglecting him, whilst they wrote up the productions at the Princess's, which Mr. Macready considered, from what he had heard of both theatres from Mr. Forster and others, were not to be compared with Mr. Phelps's.—W. M. P.

Merchant of Venice, A Midsummer Night's Dream, and King Lear, until Christmas.

On Boxing Night The Lady of Lyons was acted, and on 1st January, 1856, The Merchant of Venice, followed by A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Comedy of Errors, The Tempest, Hamlet, The City Madam, A Winter's Tale, King John, Othello, The Bridal, and A New Way to Pay Old Debts, which pieces were played until 12th March, when he took his benefit, playing Sir Edward Mortimer and Don Felix, and the season closed at the end of the month.

1856—1857.

The thirteenth season commenced on 6th September, 1856, with Macbeth, and we here insert a criticism on it by Bayle Bernard, from the *Weekly Dispatch* :—

SADLER'S WELLS.

“We are glad to record the reopening of this theatre, for its close deprives a large and populous neighbourhood of dramatic entertainment, and of a character the most estimable. So firm a hold has the intelligent management taken in the good opinion, not only of the residents, but of the metropolis generally, that even a revival of one of Shakespeare's too long dormant plays is not deemed necessary, but a recurrence is had to perhaps his greatest tragedy, Macbeth, in which Mr. Phelps plays the ambitious and criminal Thane. Of his performance of this part we have often had occasion to speak. He always brings an amount of intelligence to bear upon his interpretation of classic rôles, which strikingly distinguishes them above the level of the acting of the day—not distinguishing them by new and subtle readings, rarely if ever understood, and often more curious than proper—not by a leaning to the physical mode of obtaining applause, but a reading which adopts the truths and beauties of nature, that addresses itself alike to the mind and the feelings. The ruggedness in his acting of which some complain is rather a merit than a blemish, since it proclaims an honest reliance upon his own powers. Originality is, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, better than imitation, even though the latter be derived from a better model. Mr. Phelps powerfully portrays the struggles with conscience which agitate Macbeth in the earlier scenes, and as powerfully sustains the character in its full career of crime. The audience greeted their favourite manager enthusiastically, and the like ‘flattering unction’ fell to the share of Mr. Marston as Macduff.”

During the month this was acted with *The School for Scandal*, *The Man of the World*, *Measure for Measure*, *Richelieu*, and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. In October, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and *Hamlet*, were acted until 11th of the month, when he again revived *Timon of Athens*, on which the two following criticisms appeared, the first from the pen of F. G. Tomlins, in the *Morning Advertiser*, and the second from that of Professor Morley (editor), in the *Examiner* :—

SADLER'S WELLS.

“To initiate a good system, whether in morals or arts, is a noble thing; but to continue in it with an unflinching reliance upon it as a principle, is a nobler and rarer proceeding. A reformer has many things to encourage him to start; few to continue his brave resolutions. Novelty, that lends a lustre even to the frivolous changes of fashion, encourages and assists first efforts in everything; but we commonly see that when the gloss of freshness has passed away, efforts relax, good resolutions pull in, and enterprises of great pith and moment do from their onward current turn away, and lose the name of action. Such is too generally the fate of human efforts at improvement, for perseverance is a scarcer quality than courage; and continuity of mental effort than invention. This praiseworthy quality belongs, however, especially to the managers of Sadler's Wells Theatre. Some ten years since they commenced a complete reformation in the mode of conducting a theatre, and they have persevered with unabated energy in carrying out their admirable system. To illustrate, and not to obliterate by embellishment, the highest dramatic works was their aim; and successively to produce all that was capable of theatrical exposition in our great national dramatist they devoted themselves and their capital. With how much judgment they have done this, with what discriminating taste, with what appreciation of the author, and with what instruction and gratification to their audiences, can only be known by those who have, season after season, watched their progress and enjoyed their productions.

“One cause of the super-excellence with which the great dramas have been produced here is, that the artistic and poetical mind of Mr. Phelps has ever kept in view that the great element of the drama is human passion. He has felt that, without the delineation of this, not only in an adequate and prominent, but in a super-eminent manner, the stage is but a showman's booth, and is likely to sink to a mixture of the diorama and the casino. The difference between the exhibitions in Oxford Street and Sadler's Wells is exactly this; because at the head of one is a showman, who as lavishly illustrates Pizarro as Macbeth, whilst at the other is an artist, who, though he archæologically illustrates his author, never forgets that better are bare boards and immovable scenery, with the fervour and genius that

can delineate human character and passion, than an overwhelming show that dwarfs the meagre actor to an *homunculus*. Elevating still-life over historic and histrionic ability, and giving to stocks and stones the position of genius and poetry, is a misuse of dramatic art.

“This contrast struck us forcibly on witnessing, on Saturday night, the revival at Sadler’s Wells of Shakespeare’s noble but seldom-acted play of *Timon of Athens*. It is about five years since it was first produced at this theatre with elaborate care, and with picturesque illustration by the scene-painter. On Saturday night it was revived with many additions, much of the scenery being new painted, and altogether with a breadth of effect and a minuteness of completeness that the opportunity naturally offered to minds devoted to the greatest possible artistic illustration of the circumstances and events of such a magnificent play. Notwithstanding the numerous scenes, the rich garments, and all the costly materials that pervade the performance from the beginning to the end, with a reality that crowds the mind with ideas of a boundless luxury and revelry, still the human interest prevails; we are delighted to see the various characters develop themselves, and hear from each their characteristic impressions of the scenes and events in which they are engaged. Nor is the one great central figure dwarfed by the magnificence and variety around him, but towers above it all with the superiority of the animate over the inanimate, and of the great human feeling over all accidents, however sensuous or dazzling.

“*Timon*, as performed by Mr. Phelps, is never less, but always greater than his circumstances, which is more than can be said of most actors in such a position. We care nothing for the gold and glitter, the pomp and circumstance, the art and luxury, with which he is surrounded; but we lament when we see his prodigal generosity, and sympathize with his unreasonable and impassioned misanthropy, when he learns too late to judge of men. To thus interest by the delineation of the man, and concentrate our attention upon him, shows the power of acting; and proves that the right uses of the stage are at least maintained at Sadler’s Wells Theatre.

“It is in the latter scenes that Mr. Phelps manifests his great power of delineating character and passion. There the deep canker of *Timon*’s suffering is shown in every action and every tone. The spoiled child of the world has received a sudden lesson of life, and shocked and shattered by the truth thus thrust on him, it kills him. The change is too violent, too sudden. His confiding nature, his simple heart, his unworldly mind is overwhelmed by the discovery, and he cannot recover the shock. The great humanities never leave any of Shakespeare’s true men. He has nothing morbid in his writings, and we are never led to feel that *Timon* is right in his indiscriminating denunciations of mankind; but we cannot but mourn over a naturally noble nature thus upset, and sympathize with him as we do with the illogical young *Hamlet*, and the irascible old

monarch Lear. Timon is a thorough Shakespearean character, with the mingled good and ill inseparable from humanity. His interview with the Steward is a master-stroke of dramatic genius, for it affords the audience a just cause of sympathy; and it is deeply pathetic, for it shows what a noble creature he might have been had he been wisely trained. All this portion is exquisitely acted by Mr. Phelps, and the broken heart, for of such Timon really perishes, is apparent from the time when he finds that all the protestations he has heard are flatteries, and that he is a dupe in a world of selfishness and duplicity.

"The play is a setting for the central figure, as is always the case in the great dramas, when a name gives the title of the piece, and therefore upon the subsidiary parts it is unnecessary to dilate; but they were all uttered with a full intelligence of the author, and with painstaking effect. Mr. Marston, as Apemantus; Mr. Rae, as the Steward; and Mr. Rayner, as Alcibiades, fulfilled admirably their parts. The scenery, by Mr. Fenton, is not only archæologically correct, but picturesquely beautiful; and the diorama that shows the attack on Athens by Alcibiades, and the march of his army, is a masterpiece of effect and contrivance. The audience at this theatre come with all the desire that the French so much urge, 'to assist,' and listen with a dumb reverence to the text, and appreciate every tone and emphasis. The slightest interruption is immediately chided into silence, and the applause bursts out in spontaneous volleys, alternated by a deep and sustained attention, itself an expression of the profoundest admiration. Nor is this approbation excessive, for whoever desires to see the true uses of the stage, and the value of a national drama, be he scholar or unlearned, high or low, should certainly wend his way to Sadler's Wells, to see Shakespeare's Timon of Athens."

"Timon of Athens has been reproduced again by Mr. Phelps, with even more pains than were bestowed upon his former revival of that play, which, when he first produced it, had been acted but a few times since the days of Shakespeare. As now performed it is exceedingly effective. A main cause of the success of Mr. Phelps in his Shakespearean revivals is, that he shows in his author above all things the poet. Shakespeare's plays are always poems as performed at Sadler's Wells. The scenery is always beautiful, but it is not allowed to draw attention from the poet, with whose whole conception it is made to blend in the most perfect harmony. The actors are content also to be subordinated to the play, learn doubtless at rehearsals how to subdue excesses of expression, that by giving undue force to one part would destroy the balance of the whole, and blend their work in such a way as to produce everywhere the right emphasis. If Mr. Phelps takes upon himself the character which needs the most elaborate development, however carefully and perfectly he may produce his own impression of his part, he never by his acting drags it out of its place in the drama.

He takes heed that every part, even the meanest, shall have in the acting as much prominence as Shakespeare gave it in his plan, and it is for this reason that with actors, many of whom are anything but stars, the result most to be desired is really obtained. Shakespeare appears in his integrity, and his plays are found to affect audiences less as dramas, in a common sense, than as great poems. This is the case especially with *Timon*. It may be that one cause of its long neglect, as potent as the complaint that it excites no interest by female characters, is the large number of *dramatis persone*, to whom are assigned what many actors might consider parts of which they can make nothing, and who, being presented in a slovenly way by a number of inferior performers, would leave only one part in the drama, and take all the power out of that. Such an objection has not, however, any weight at Sadler's Wells, where every member of the company is taught to regard the poetry he speaks according to its nature rather than its quantity. The personators of the Poet and the Painter in the first scene of the *Timon* as now acted, manifestly say what Shakespeare has assigned to them to say, with as much care and as much certainty that it will be listened to with due respect, as if they were themselves *Timons*, *Hamlets*, and *Macbeths*. Nobody rants,—it becomes his part that Alcibiades should be a little blustering,—nothing is slurred; a servant who has anything to say says it in earnest, making his words heard and his meaning felt. And so it is that, although only in one or two cases we may have observed at Sadler's Wells originality of genius in the actor, we have nevertheless perceived something like the entire sense of one of Shakespeare's plays, and have been raised above ourselves by the perception. It is not because of anything peculiar in the air of Islington, or because an audience at Pentonville is made of men differing in nature from those who would form an audience in the Strand, that Shakespeare is listened to at Sadler's Wells with reverence not shown elsewhere. What has been done at Islington could, if the same means were employed, be done at Drury Lane. But Shakespeare is not fairly heard when he is made to speak from behind masses of theatrical upholstery, or when it is assumed that there is but one character in any of his plays, and that the others may be acted as incompetent performers please. If the *Messiah* were performed at Exeter Hall, with special care to intrust some of the chief solos to a good bass or contralto, the rest being left to chance, and members of the chorus allowed liberty to sing together in all keys, we should enjoy Handel much as we are *sometimes* asked to enjoy Shakespeare on the London stage. What Signor Costa will do for an orchestra the manager must do for his company, if he would present a work of genius in such a way as to procure for it a full appreciation.

"Such thoughts are suggested by the effect which *Timon* of Athens is producing on the audiences at Sadler's Wells. The play is a poem to them. The false friends, of whom one declares, 'The swallow follows not summer more willing, than we your lordship,' and upon

whom Timon retorts, 'Nor more willingly leaves winter,' are as old as the institution of society. Since men had commerce first together to the present time, the cry has been, 'Such summer birds are men.' The rush of a generous, impulsive nature from one rash extreme into the other, the excesses of the man who never knew 'the middle of humanity,' is but another common form of life. And when have men not hung—the poets, the philosophers, the lovers, the economists, men of all habits—over a contemplation of the contrast between that soft town life, represented by the luxury of Athens in its wealth and its effemiracy, and the life of a man who, like Timon before his cave's mouth, turns from gold because it is not eatable, and digs in the wood for roots? With a bold hand Shakespeare grasped the old fable of Timon, and moulded it into a form that expresses much of the perplexity and yearning of our nature. He takes up Timon, a free-handed and large-hearted lord, who, though 'to Lacedæmon did his lands extend,' found them too little to content his restless wish to pour himself all out in kindness to his fellows. He leaves him dead by the shore of the mysterious eternal sea. I do not dwell upon the play itself, for here the purpose only is to show in what way it can be made, when fitly represented—and is made at Sadler's Wells—to stir the spirit as a poem. Mr. Phelps in his own acting of Timon treats the character as an ideal, as the central figure in a mystery. As the liberal Athenian lord, his gestures are large, his movements free—out of himself everything pours, towards himself he will draw nothing. As the disappointed Timon, whose love of his kind is turned to hate, he sits on the ground self-contained, but miserable in the isolation, from first to last contrasting with Apemantus, whom 'fortune's tender arm never with favour clasped,' who is a churl by the original sourness of his nature, hugs himself in his own ragged robe, and worships himself for his own ill-manners. Mr. Marston's Apemantus is well acted, and helps much to secure a right understanding of the entire play."

During October and November, until 15th, *Love's Sacrifice*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Julius Cæsar*, and *The Man of the World* were played when Timon was not acted; and on that date he produced from the text Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew*, and on the 6th December the following appeared in the *Examiner* from the pen of its editor, Professor Morley:—

The induction to *The Taming of the Shrew* enables Mr. Phelps to represent in Christopher Sly Shakespeare's sketch of a man purely sensual and animal, brutish in appetite, and with a man unleavened by fancy. Such a presentment would not suit the uses of the poet, it could excite only disgust, if it were not throughout as humorous as faithful. Mr. Phelps knows this; and perhaps the most interesting point to be noted in his Christopher Sly is, that the uncompromising

truth of his portraiture of the man buried and lost in his animal nature, is throughout, by subtle touches, easy to appreciate, but hard to follow, made subservient to the laws of art; and the sketch, too, is clearly the more accurate for being humorous. Throughout we laugh and understand.

"Hamlet and Christopher Sly are at the two ends of Shakespeare's list of characters, and with a singular skill, Mr. Phelps, who is the best Hamlet now upon the stage, banishes from his face every spark of intelligence while representing Sly. Partly he affects this by keeping the eyes out of court as witnesses of intelligence. The lids are drooped in the heavy slumberousness of a stupid nature; there is no such thing as a glance of intelligence allowed to escape from under them; the eyes are hidden almost entirely when they are not widely exposed in a stupid stare. The acting of this little sketch is, indeed, throughout most careful and elaborate. There is, as we have said, no flinching from the perfect and emphatical expression of the broader lights and shadows of the character. Christopher is at first sensually drunk; and when, after his awakening in the lord's house, the page is introduced to him as his lady wife, another chord of sensuality is touched, the brute hugs and becomes amorous. Of the imagination that, even when there are offered to the sensual body new delights of the appetite, is yet unable to soar beyond the reach already attained, Mr. Phelps, in the details of his acting, gives a variety of well-conceived suggestions. Thus, to the invitation, 'Will't please your mightiness to wash your hands?' Christopher, when he has grasped the fact that a basin is being held before him in which he must wash, enters upon such a wash as sooty hands of tinkers only can require, and having made an end of washing and bespattering, lifts up instinctively the corner of his velvet robe to dry his hands upon.

"The stupidity of Sly causes his disappearance from the stage in the most natural way after the play itself has warmed into full action. He has of course no fancy for it, is unable to follow it, stares at it, and falls asleep over it. The sport of imagination acts upon him as a sleeping-draught, and at the end of the first act he is so fast asleep that it becomes matter of course to carry him away. The induction thus insensibly fades into the play, and all trace of it is lost by the time that a lively interest in the comedy itself has been excited."

The following, written by F. G. Tomlins, was in the *Morning Advertiser*:—

"On Saturday evening *The Taming of the Shrew* was produced, with new scenery, dresses, and decorations, being, according to the bills of the performance, the twenty-ninth play of Shakespeare's produced under the present management. This statement briefly points out the obligations of the admirers of our great dramatist to those who have so worthily and intelligently illustrated his works. It has also proved that a far greater proportion of the plays than had been

supposed capable of interesting a modern audience, have been found to be instinct with a vitality that is indestructible.

"The Taming of the Shrew is undoubtedly not one of the dramas that place Shakespeare above and beyond all writers for the stage; and there can be no doubt that he bestowed but little pains upon it; taking up the old play and the old story, and merely rapidly running over it, but leaving everywhere, both in character and language, the traces of the richness of his mind. The plot comprises two stories, as old as human society; the one consisting of young lovers baffling old guardians; and the other of a firm spirit subduing a shrewish one. These tales are not very artistically interwoven by any one of the old dramatists from Ariosto to Shakespeare; for ingenuity of construction is the last thing that comes into a theatre, and seems likely to be the last thing remaining; for it exists when wit, dialogue, and character are gone; as we see in the Parisian drama, and that of its English followers of the present day.

"The most remarkable thing about The Taming of the Shrew is the induction, a kind of prologue, in which the drunken boor is taken by a nobleman to his house, and made to believe he is a lord, and to delight whom the veritable drama is played. This is no invention of Shakespeare's, as it is found in the old play, The Taming of a Shrew, and on what account so remarkable an introduction was given it is difficult to say, probably to give some low comedian of the time an opportunity of showing his talent in mimicking boorish simplicity and drunkenness. Shakespeare has greatly heightened the character of Sly, and many celebrated comedians have delighted in representing the bewildered sot. From Hamlet and Brutus, there is a wide step to Sly; yet, as actors delight in showing their versatility, and truly it is the strongest test of their power, we are not surprised that Mr. Phelps undertook this brief part on Saturday. He depicts it with Dutch fidelity and characteristic humour, and his rendering was as fine as that of a stage Teniers or Ostade. The brutal sottishness, the slow awaking to some degree of sense, the extreme perplexity at the luxuries he is transferred to, and the humorous recognition of his supposed lady, were all greatly relished by the audience, who here watch every action of their favourite actors with eagerness, and with an appreciation that bespeaks a cultivated connoisseurship. The applause was continuous, and a vehement call at the close of the induction brought Mr. Phelps on the stage to receive the universal admiration of the audience.

"The play then proceeded, and was very agreeably acted throughout. The scenes with Petruchio and Katharina form the staple commodity of the piece; and the violence of the Shrew, and the steady and severe training of her tamer, beget, as they always do, hearty enjoyment in the audience. Mr. Marston is a capital Petruchio—manly, hearty, humorous, but, withal, the gentleman. Miss Atkinson depicted with great force, perhaps somewhat in excess, the Shrew; but her gradual submission and her final speech were grace-

fully and admirably rendered. Applause was liberally bestowed on them, and a genuine and universal call was raised for them at the end of the fourth act. Mr. Lewis Ball gave full effect to the foolish serving-man, Grumio; and Miss Eliza Travers great point to the smart Biondeillo.

"The lovers' portion was nicely played by Mr. Belford as Lucentio; Mr. Robinson as Tranio; Mr. Haywell as Hortensio; Mr. Williams as the old Baptista; Mr. T. C. Harris as Vincentio; and Mr. J. W. Ray as Gremio; who rendered this lively old man with great spirit and sense. Miss Jenny Marston was a pretty and innocent Bianca, and stood out adorned with feminine grace and gentleness, in contrast to her fiery sister.

"The entire five acts were rigidly played, and it must be confessed that to hackneyed play-goers of the modern school, the earlier scenes occasionally dragged; but the audience, we firmly believe, would not have lost a word. They come with the antique feeling to this theatre, throw themselves into the story, and having, by close attention and an intelligent sympathy, made personal acquaintance with the characters, they desire to know the history and the end of every one of them. This was the exact feeling of the old audiences for whom the great dramas were composed. They had sat out mysteries dramatising the Creation; they had seen the whole chronicle histories put on the stage with all their details; and they had now the novels of the time produced with all their minute incidents and numerous characters. They were in no hurry to leave the theatre, but desired a full and faithful representation of all matters. To them nothing was tedious that related to the characters, and indeed they expected also poetical dissertation, philosophical discussions, and witty commentary. What relation this kind of drama has to the prevailing French school may be readily perceived. This modern drama may be styled the impatient, for in it all is eagerness and action, and the audience must be hurried from event to event with railway celerity, to which it may well be compared, for there is no time for observation on the journey, which is ever barren, the only excitement being gained at the brief pauses at the various situations, which, like stations, are placed along the swift and unreflecting iron way.

"It is almost superfluous to say, this revival was well put on the stage, for that is sure to be the case with a Shakespeare play at this theatre. The dresses were particularly good, having the Italian fashion, and being in remarkably good taste as to colour and material. The house was crowded, and doubtless *The Taming of the Shrew* will prove as attractive as the other twenty-eight dramas of Shakespeare, that the managers have already so successfully produced."

This piece, with *Othello*, *Hamlet*, *First Part of Henry IV.*, *Virginius*, *Macbeth*, *The School for Scandal*, *Venice Preserved*, *Julius Cæsar*, and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, was played up

to 14th January, 1857, when he again produced *The Twelfth Night*; and on the 24th of that month Professor Morley wrote of this play as follows:—

“For the past fortnight the four nights a week dedicated at Sadler’s Wells to Shakespeare have been occupied by performances of *Twelfth Night*, last acted here five years ago, in which comedy the part of Malvolio is that sustained by Mr. Phelps. When but half-a-dozen more of these plays shall have been produced, it will be a subject of just pride to the manager of Sadler’s Wells that he will have mounted on his little stage all the dramatic works of our great poet; that—apart from his own personations—he will have gathered round him a small company of actors, zealous to perform them all with a true sense of what they are about; and will have taught an audience mainly composed of hard-working men, who crowd a sixpenny gallery and shilling pit, heartily to enjoy the sweetest and the noblest verse man ever wrote.

“The aspect and behaviour of the pit and gallery at Sadler’s Wells during the performance of one of Shakespeare’s plays cannot fail to impress most strongly every visitor who is unaccustomed to the place. There sit our working classes in a happy crowd, as orderly and reverent as if they were at church, and yet as unrestrained in their enjoyment as if listening to stories told them by their own firesides. Shakespeare spoke home to the heart of the natural man, even in the same words that supply matter for nice judgment by the intellect. He was as a cook who, by the same meat that feeds abundantly the hungry, tickles with an exquisite delight the palate of the epicure. It is hard to say how much men who have had few advantages of education, must in their minds and characters be strengthened and refined when they are made accustomed to this kind of entertainment.

“Upon a stage thus managed Mr. Phelps has of late years been the personator of about *thirty* of the characters of Shakespeare. Great men or small, heroes or cowards, sages or simpletons, sensual or spiritual men, he has taken all as characters that Shakespeare painted, studied them minutely, and embodied each in what he thinks to be a true Shakespearean form. Bottom the Weaver, Brutus, Falstaff, Macbeth, Christopher Sly are characters assumed by the same man, not to display some special power in the actor, but the range of power in the poet to whose illustration he devotes himself. Good tragedian as he is, we suppose that it is in a sort of comedy, vaguely to be defined as dry and intellectual, but in his hands always most diverting, that Mr. Phelps finds the bent of his genius as an actor to be most favoured. Thus in Malvolio he would appear to have a part pretty exactly suited to his humour, none the less so because there is perhaps no character in which he is himself lost sight of so completely; substance vanishes, and shadow lives.

“Malvolio lives at Sadler’s Wells in bearing and attire modelled upon the fashion of the Spaniard, as impassive in his manner as a Spanish king should be. In one of the first sentences addressed to him we are told his character: ‘O, you are sick of self-love, Malvolio, and taste things with a distempered appetite.’ Such a man is the Malvolio we see. When in his tasting of Maria’s letter he betrays his distempered appetite for greatness, we are not allowed to suppose for a moment that he loves his mistress. Seeing that, as Maria says, ‘it is his ground of faith that all that look on him love him,’ he accepts easily the hope of greatness thrust upon him, and his rejoicing is in the love of Olivia, not in the way of sympathy, but as a way to ‘sitting in his state, calling his officers about him in his branched velvet gown.’ Such a man, as Mr. Phelps represents him, walks not with a smirk and a light comic strut, but in the heaviness of grandeur, with a face grave through very emptiness of all expression. This Malvolio stalks blind about the world; his eyes are very nearly covered with their heavy lids, for there is nothing in the world without that is worth noticing, it is enough for him to contemplate the excellence within; walled up in his own temple of the flesh, he is his own adorer. If his ears are assailed with irreverences by the Fool, he counts the Fool as naught, and is moved therefore but to the expression of a passing shade of pity for his ignorance. Upon the debasement of Sir Toby and Sir Andrew he looks down with very calm disdain. When in the latter half of the play he has been bidden, as he thinks, by her who will thrust greatness on him, to be opposite with a kinsman, surly with servants, and, if he entertain her love, to let it appear in his smiling, though he had been practising behaviour to his shadow, all the smile he can produce is one of intense satisfaction with himself, and all the surliness but a more open expression of disdain for those who do not pay him homage. When locked up as a madman, he is sustained by his self-content, and by the honest certainty that he has been notoriously abused; and when at last he for once opens his eyes on learning how he has been tricked, they close again in happy self-content, and he is retiring in state without deigning a word to his tormentors, when, as the fool had twitted him by noting how ‘the whirligig of time brings in his revenges,’ he remembers that the whirligig is still in motion. Therefore, marching back with as much increase of speed as is consistent with magnificence, he threatens all—including now Olivia in his contempt—‘I’ll be revenged on the whole pack of you.’

“Other Malvolios seen by the play-goers of this generation have been more fantastical and caused more laughter—although this one causes much—but the impression made by them has been less deep. Few who have seen or may see at Sadler’s Wells the Spanish-looking steward of the Countess Olivia, and laughed at the rise and fall of his *château en Espagne*, will forget him speedily. Like a quaint portrait in which there are master-strokes, his figure may dwell in the mind for years.”

Bayle Bernard, in the *Weekly Dispatch*, also wrote the following masterly criticism :—

SADLER'S WELLS.

“The Twelfth Night, in some respects, is the most charming comedy of Shakespeare. If it have not the romance of *As You Like It*, nor the brilliant wit of *Much Ado*, in amount of character and incident it is superior to them both, whilst in absolute hilarity it is only equalled by *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. The romantic part of the story was taken, as usual, from *Bandello*, and very good it is; the involvement of *Viola* with *Olivia* and the Duke is just as engaging as it is dramatic. The comic plot is Shakespeare's own. And how well has Genius adjusted the balance of original conception! We have nothing pleasanter or heartier in the whole round of comic fiction than the conspiracy against *Malvolio*, or the enforced combat of the two cowards, poor *Sir Andrew* and the Page. They stand out even in the poet as master instances of the ludicrous. And if we can say this of its incident, how much more of its character! Save in *Rosalind* and *Imogen*, where have we the parallel of *Viola*? These only can compete with her in all that constitutes the poetic ideal of her sex—gentleness, purity, affection; whilst a distinction still remains to her which some have thought a higher charm. Both *Rosalind* and *Imogen* are of a hardier constitution. The one has a more buoyant, the other a more enduring, spirit. There is a delicacy in *Viola* which almost approaches to fragility, and which we feel to be as unequal to wild enjoyment as to deep sorrow. Who does not see that if concealment had continued to prey upon her cheek, life itself must have become its food; that, to her, happiness is being! Pass from her side to that of the chamberlain, and we enter a new world. We quit the ideal for the real, and see it is as wonderful, if not as enchanting. We have long held the opinion that *Malvolio*, next to *Falstaff*, is the poet's highest comic conception. It is true, the one is humour's epitome, whilst the other is but one of its aspects; but then that other is so entirely a world of feeling in itself that their difference is rather one of measure than of kind. It is a somewhat smaller circle, but an equally complete one. Never did self-esteem attain before to such magnificent proportions. The consciousness of *Malvolio* has almost a poetic elevation. He is a sun under a cloud—a true gentleman cloaked in livery. Servitude may degrade others, but him it only purifies. It is the charcoal through which he filters. Thus, *Olivia*'s supposed regard for him is nothing overwhelming. It rather comes as a matter of course. A hint from *Maria* begets, and a thought or two confirms it. She must always have perceived his merit, and only waits her time to say so. And so, at once, he begins to build his future, not so much in the spirit of a dream as of a reasonable development of inevitable circumstances. ‘Having been three months married to her,’ this is his first step! His second is not so

much to dilate upon his greatness (his 'sitting in state' in 'his branched velvet gown') as to impress on his officers his easy sense of it (he knows his place, as he would they should theirs), and more especially to impress his sense of it on his unruly kinsman, Toby. 'Quenching his familiar smile with an austere regard of control,' he would let him see that his right of speech was, after all, but one of the adjustments of a compensating destiny. 'Cousin Toby—my fortunes having cast me on your niece!' How grandly sustained is all this, and how naturally it leads to all the conclusions he so easily derives from the forged letter! It is meant for him beyond a question. His lady loves him; and when she says she would thrust greatness upon him, it is not more a proof of her love than it is of his desert. 'Thy fates open their hands, let thy blood and spirit embrace them;' and how in keeping with this sense of merit is his exasperation at his imprisonment! His wounded vanity stung to the quick annihilates all reverence. He comes to his lady in a fury, and almost demands from her an apology. Well associated with this conception is that trio of comic roysterers, who alone would have given to this comedy an imperishable distinction. How wonderful is their individuality, and how irresistible their union. What substance and shadow for instance are Sir Toby and Sir Andrew!—the hearty Bacchanalian running over quite as much with love of jollity as drink; and the shred of manhood his companion, who, worshipping him as his exemplar, drinks and fights at his bidding till he gets beaten into reason. How perfect is the contrast between the excess of force and the want of it; the mad uproar of the one and the timorous ambition of the other; and how admirably contrasts with both the shrewd humour of the Clown, who, whilst partaking in their revel, can keep clear of its fruits! The Clown or Fool of *The Twelfth Night* well sustains his historic dignity. He is the true wit of the company; the privileged good sense, who assumes the mask of folly in order to warrant a reproof, and whose gibes delight the peasant while they fail to gall the master. But the Clown of *The Twelfth Night* has even more distinction. He is the merriest of spirits. He goes through the house singing. He has such an appetite for fun, that, be it practical or mental, nothing comes amiss to him. Whether he engage in a word-combat, or join in a midnight revel, or share in a plot against the chamberlain, he is ready for it all, with the same abundant gusto. He is the prince of Shakespeare's fools. Even Touchstone is not so witty, with all his greater reputation; which, however, may be explained by his having all his play to himself. In the 'Forest of Arden' there is no Sir Toby and no Malvolio. And as if all this wealth of humour were not enough to stock a comedy, we have Fabian and Maria, with all their pleasantry and shrewdness. What an extraordinary group of servants!—when did ever poet before conjure up such a merry household? The acting of this play throughout we can scarcely speak of but in terms which would seem to be exaggerated. Whilst some portions have a merit

which we have never seen surpassed, the general representation has that level amount of excellence which has won for this theatre its long and well-deserved distinction. The Malvolio of Mr. Phelps is one of the most signal of his successes. It is his highest effort in Shakespearean comedy, and beyond all comparison the greatest performance of this character that has been witnessed in our time. The very best that we have seen, not even excepting William Farren's, was poor and meagre by the side of it. Something, perhaps, he owes to the natural gravity of his manner, deepening at times to a formality, which a certain amount of humour could manage to expand into the happiest illustration of a high sense of self-esteem; but still, manner is not conception. It is but material in the hands of art, and the most perfect form only makes more necessary the perfect spirit that should inspire it. There is a sort of frozen calm about his notion of Malvolio, a solidified presumption, that conveys the grandest sense of his elevated consciousness. He is as little to be thawed by courtesy as he is to be shattered by collision. He sails about as a sort of iceberg, towering over spray and tumult. His lady is the only sun that has power to dissolve him. There is condescension in all he does. His vision of his future seems to suppose a crowd of listeners whom he will oblige with the particulars. His acceptance of his lady's love is quite as approving as it is grateful. He is her man, and she is wise in having him; and when, to please her, he agrees to smile, it is plain he feels he is rewarding her. The smile itself was quite a study. What a gleam from a November sky! A face that finely discriminated the amount of light it should distribute, that kept its clouds for his inferiors—('the demure travel of regard')—a sort of haze for kinsman Toby, whilst its beams, as became a gentleman, were treasured for his lady. To all lovers of good acting we commend this great performance. Second to it only at all points was the Sir Toby of Mr. Ray. Here again was an interpretation which we had never enjoyed before. Thoroughly Shakespearean in spirit, its feeling saved its treatment from all impoverishment of excess. It had vigour without uproar, and enjoyment without burlesque. In this respect we could not but feel how superior it was to Bartley's, whose over-emphasis in everything agreed so little with his sound conceptions. Mr. Ray has been known for many years as one of our most genuine comedians, and how it is his fortunes have answered so slightly to his indisputable merits no one seems able to explain. The Viola of Mrs. Charles Young may be characterized in a few words. It is almost a reproduction of the Viola of Ellen Tree, who for so many years made it her own, and by a performance so enchanting that it has become to us its standard. Mrs. Young certainly imparts to it rather a deeper tinge of sadness, which conduces to its interest but detracts from its relief. Still she brings before us all her precursor's touching sensibility, her soft poetic grace—and can we praise her more? The Sir Andrew of Mr. Marston rather startled us, we confess, the character is so opposed to what we are accustomed to

connect him with—the genial impersonation of manhood and good sense. Still, clever and conscientious in everything he does, his just design made amends for many material obstructions. The only exceptional performance was that of Mr. Chester, whose Clown wanted the force and also the enjoyment of this prince of jesters. This defect, however, was greatly balanced by the spirit and hilarity of Miss Travers and Mr. Belford—(Mr. Belford should have played Sir Andrew)—whose Maria and Fabian were as good as they could be. We must not close this account without referring to the attractive Duke of Mr. Robinson—a character, oddly enough, that used to be allotted to old men—and the stately grace and melodious voice of Miss Atkinson as Olivia, a young lady who bids fair to win fortune in the future.”

On 18th February *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* was produced, but Phelps did not play in this piece.

Nothing new was produced afterwards during this season, and it closed with *Money* and *Nicholas Flam*, for his benefit.

1857—1858.

The fourteenth season commenced early in September, 1857, with *Hamlet*, followed by *The Hunchback*, *Money*, and *Cymbeline*; and on the 30th of that month he produced Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost*, on which Professor Morley wrote in the *Examiner*:—

“*Love's Labour's Lost*—The Comedy of Leisure—ought to be acceptable as a relief to busy men in anxious times. It has been observed that there is only one morsel of business in the whole play, and that is mentioned to be postponed till to-morrow. The play as now acted at Sadler's Wells runs daintily and pleasantly; they err who see in it only a caricature of Euphuism. Euphuism, when the comedy appeared, was a language of compliment congenial to the temper of the times, and in many of its forms, while it was not less absurd than the tone of compliment conventional in our own day, it was a great deal wittier and wiser. There was room for wit in the invention of conceits, and an amusing ingenuity in their extravagance.

‘Thou shin'st in every tear that I do weep;
No drop but as a coach doth carry thee.’

“Shakespeare undoubtedly took pleasure in this way of frolic with the wit; it is a form of fancy, and over the whole range of fancy he was lord. Pleasant euphuisms find their way even into his graver

plays, and in this play, which he devoted to chasing of conceit through all its forms, the most poetical and the most prosy, it is manifest that he not only heartily enjoyed the sport himself, but that it must have given special pleasure to the men of his own day. He laughed no doubt at the hollowness of all conceits, and represented them as labour lost; his sharpest satire being expressed in the part of Don Adriano de Armado, a fantastical Spaniard. This is the part assumed at Sadler's Wells by Mr. Phelps.

"It has a certain general resemblance to his Malvolio, inasmuch as these are both fantastical and foolish men; but Mr. Phelps defines clearly the essential difference between the two. One was a substantial and not ignorant steward, covering with affectations a substantial ambition to become the husband of his rich and beautiful mistress, and to be a lord. The other is a man who carries all his bravery outside. He talks conceitedly of love, and in his soul carries enshrined the image of a country drab, its best ideal. He affects finery of speech, and is so utterly destitute of ideas, that to count three he must depend upon the help of a child who is his servant, and his master in all passages of wit. He carries a brave outside of clothes, but cannot fight in his shirt, because, as he is driven to admit, 'the naked truth of it is I have no shirt.' This is the view of his character to which Mr. Phelps gives prominence by many a clever touch, such as the empty drawl on the word love, whenever Armado uses it, or the lumbering helplessness of wit displayed by the great Spaniard when magnificently and heavily conversing with the tiny Moth, in which part little Miss Rose Williams has been taught to bring out very perfectly some telling points.

"We must not part from the play without praising the Biron of Mr. Henry Marston; the clever rendering of the conceits of the Schoolmaster and Curate by Mr. Williams and Mr. C. Fenton; and the Ferdinand of Mr. F. Robinson. Mrs. Charles Young—who is new to London, and has, during the last few weeks, taken honours at Sadler's Wells in two or three characters—looked and spoke like a lady, as Princess of France, and Miss Fitzpatrick did fair justice to her talent as the laughing Rosaline."

John Oxenford in the *Times* also wrote as follows:—

SADLER'S WELLS.

"Love's Labour's Lost, a comedy which we believe lay untouched by the hand of theatrical manager from the time of the closing of the theatres by the Puritans till the opening of Covent Garden by Madame Vestris, who chose it to inaugurate her rule, and which since that period has been kept aloof from every stage—Love's Labour's Lost was produced last night at Sadler's Wells with a display of picturesque beauty and completeness of detail in every respect that must have surpassed the expectations even of those who

are aware what Mr. Phelps can do when he sets about reviving the piece that he designs for the curiosity of the season.

“The readers of Shakespeare need not be informed that the interest taken in this very primitive play is chiefly of the literary kind, and that in all the elements that usually make a drama a cause of excitement it is singularly deficient. The Shakespearean student may love to see Beatrice and Benedick foreshadowed by Rosaline and Biron, or the play of the clowns in *Midsummer Night's Dream* predicted by the masque of the Nine Worthies, and may cheerfully welcome the ‘fantastical Spaniard’ as the type of the so-called Euphuism, which became a transient fashion in the Elizabethan age. But to the ordinary reader or spectator, who, apart from all considerations of the sort, judges of *Love's Labour's Lost*, as a play of the usual stamp, the want of definite purpose, the abundance of obsolete pleasantries that are bandied about, and the avowedly unsatisfactory nature of the conclusion, will appear not a little perplexing. A number of quaint figures, some graceful, others grotesque, have flitted along, working sedulously at the elaboration of trifles, and arriving at no result.

“Mr. Phelps has taken this difficult subject in hand with a keen eye to its capabilities. In the first place it can be treated so as to present a charming picture of a mediæval Court, resting beneath the shade of the greenwood tree, and by the side of the brook, from the cares and pomps connected with stately domiciles. This side he has seized, and the scenery, beautifully painted by Mr. C. S. James, the costumes and the groupings, all carry us back to that atmosphere of sylvan aristocracy of which we may read at large in the *Arcadia* of Sir Philip Sydney. A more happy combination of the Court and the landscape could not be presented than in the series of sparkling pictures that follow each other on the stage of Sadler's Wells.

“In the second place, although there is not one great part in *Love's Labour's Lost*, it is a piece over which a great deal of good acting may be diffused, for even the smallest parts are marked characters, and some of them very strongly and very strangely defined. Here, too, Mr. Phelps has shown the excellence of his generalship. The list of *dramatis personæ* was formidable in length, but he has so well applied the talent of his company that there is not a single weakly acted part. For himself he has taken the ‘fantastical Spaniard,’ and made of him one of his choicest comic impersonations. The Spanish head, the manner of dealing with the euphuistic phraseology, the artificial drawl, the complacent good humour that tolerates and even encourages the impertinences of the page, make up an entirely fresh creation, totally distinct from the fops of stage convention, however it may resemble them in moral attributes. Holofernes, the schoolmaster, a fop of the pedantic sort, as exceptional in his way as Don Adriano, is most carefully and naturally rendered by Mr. Williams, who happily combines the scholastic sensitiveness with a fund of internal good nature. The line, ‘*bonè for bene* :

Priscian a little scratched; 'twill serve,' he gives with marvellous effect, showing at once the magnitude of the crime committed by the ignorant curate and his own magnanimity in passing it over. Mr. Lewis Ball, who is always at home in Shakespearean clowns, is exactly fitted with Costard, and Dull, the constable, is wrought up to the highest degree of inanity by Mr. Meagreson. The little boy Moth, played by Miss Rose Williams, is the most serviceable adjunct to the stately Spaniard, the nicely balanced phrases of Mr. Phelps being most ludicrously contrasted by the pert speeches of the boy, while the figures of the two speakers stand as bodily types of formal coxcombry and mother wit. Turning to the courtly personages, we find Mr. H. Marston as Biron displaying a knowledge of Elizabethan gallantry and vivacity that is generally becoming obsolete, Mr. F. Robinson looking most comely as the King, Mrs. Charles Young speaking most judiciously and unaffectedly as the Princess of France, Miss Fitzpatrick sparkling forth as Rosaline, and the whole glittering train worthily closed by Mr. J. W. Ray, as the facetious veteran of the Court, Boyet. Rarely have so many parts been so well played."

On 17th October Othello was again done, and on 21st October As You Like It, for the purpose of introducing Mrs. Charles Young in a second and more prominent Shakespearean character, viz. Rosalind, which she played charmingly. This lady had already made a very successful *début* as Julia in The Hunchback, to our thinking the best we had had since Miss Laura Addison's.

Phelps's Jaques was, as it always was, quaint and dry, and produced many a peal of laughter, whilst his delivery of "All the world's a stage," and "A fool, a fool! I met a fool i' the forest," brought down prolonged applause. Mr. Frederick Robinson was Orlando; and Lewis Ball, the Prince of Shakespearean clowns, Touchstone.

That piece was followed by Hamlet, and afterwards The Merchant of Venice, in which Mrs. Young played Portia.

On the 4th November Colman and Garrick's comedy of The Clandestine Marriage was the novelty produced, he assuming for the first time the elder Farren's great part of Lord Ogleby, which Garrick wrote for himself but never acted. King, the original Sir Peter Teazle, was also the original Lord Ogleby. Phelps's assumption of the character of the old *débauché* was, in our opinion, superior even to Farren's in some parts, and he did not descend to the mistake on that undeniably great actor's part of resorting to tricks for effect, one of which was to put

his hair in curl-papers. It was a master-piece of high comedy, and to show what one of the best judges of acting then living thought of it, we insert a criticism by F. G. Tomlins, from the *Morning Advertiser* of the following day, on the production:—

SADLER'S WELLS.

“It has been the custom of Mr. Phelps to produce each season some one or two highly-illustrated revivals, and to appear in a new leading character in comedy. The new part Mr. Phelps has this year chosen to give, with all the effects of the profoundest study and the nicest art, is Lord Ogleby, and consequently the comedy of *The Clandestine Marriage* was last night produced in full perfection. The chief interest on such an occasion is the novel portraiture of a celebrated dramatic character by this versatile comedian, and therefore, notwithstanding the excellence of the entire performance, we must believe that the principal object of the very large audience was to see how the personator of Hamlet and the heroes of Shakespeare would enact the old *débauché*, whose course of sensuality has not quite obliterated his feelings as a gentleman, nor entirely destroyed the delicacy of a man of taste.

“The wonder of such a performance has been abated by Mr. Phelps's performances, in a matchless manner, of Bottom the Weaver, Falstaff, Sir Archy Macsarcasm, and Sir Peter Teazle; and such characterizations have shown him to be the truest actor of his age. To personate with the versatility of a Proteus totally contrary characters—heroes and cowards, the tragic and the comic—is to show the possession of a genuine histrionic genius: and this Mr. Phelps has done in a manner unequalled in our time, and which is only paralleled in the history of the stage, by Garrick and Henderson.

“The conception of Lord Ogleby is admirable, and is executed with the nicest judgment, for just so much truth and feeling are thrown into it as the sketchy nature of the part and the comedy will permit. The cadaverous resuscitation of the emaciated old rake by artificial stimulants is indicated, and the revoltingness of age aping youth is sufficiently manifested, without interfering with our sense of the ridiculous, or allowing the portrait to deepen into actual hideousness until it becomes serious. The bright lights of the picture are brought out in the strongest way by the actor, and the passion for the beautiful, the lingering desire to enjoy the ecstatic joys of youth, and the real touches of feeling that relieve the part were admirably rendered. The physical miseries of the earlier portion were cleverly, because comically portrayed; but the great demonstration was made in the fourth act, where the tindery old man, still bearing in his brain the ideas of youth, beauty, and love, imagines the fascinations of his prime still remain to him. This was rendered so truly that one almost forgave the hallucination,

although its absurdity was apparent. There was a remnant of chivalry in the fervent vanity that, though it did not lessen the folly, gave it an air of taste and reality that redeemed it from actual abhorrence.

"The perfection of the self-delusion was completely shown, and worked up to a climax that was extremely effective, and which produced long and loud applause, and a call at the end of the act. All the by-play—the arrogant petulance with the cringing Canton, the ill-subdued hauteur with the moneyed Cit, the repulsive and ceremonious politeness to Mrs. Heidelberg and Miss Stirling, and the innate pride of rank, were brought out with the force which this actor knows how to give to every suggestion of his author. As a new portraiture it may be considered as a new triumph, and undoubtedly will be as popular as the other eccentric and comic characters this actor, heretofore considered only as a tragedian, has so successfully portrayed.

"The cast is in every way excellent, comprising Mr. Henry Marston, as Sir John Melville; Mr. Ray, as Stirling; Mr. F. Robinson, Young Lovewell; Brush, Mr. Belford; Canton, Mr. Williams; Mrs. Heidelberg, Mrs. H. Marston (who was welcomed, on her return from the Haymarket, in the warmest manner); Miss Stirling, Miss Fitzpatrick; Fanny, Mrs. C. Young; Betty, Miss Eliza Travers; and the Chambermaid, Miss Caroline Parkes. It would occupy too much space at this late hour to particularize the excellence of each performer, and it must suffice to say that the acting of each, from the highest to the lowest, deserves especial notice. In consequence of this perfection in all its parts the entire comedy went admirably, and will become extremely popular, and delight that large portion of the public which still desires to see the standard works of our drama adequately rendered."

The entire play was magnificently performed, and as perfectly in every character as it had been for thirty years previously, and this we say with a vivid recollection of not only Farren, but Leigh Murray, Mrs. Glover, and Mrs. Stirling in the cast.

On 14th November *Macbeth* was again produced, followed on the 21st by *Cymbeline* for Mrs. Charles Young's Imogen, another good performance of that delicate creation. Phelps of course was Leonatus; Marston, Iachimo; and Alfred Rayner was Bellarius.

On 28th *The Fatal Dowry* was again performed, his Romont and Marston's Charalois producing all the old enthusiasm.

On 5th December *King Lear* was again acted, and was played several times during the remainder of the season, with Hamlet, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Othello*, *Macbeth*, *As You Like it*, *The Clandestine Marriage*, *Cymbeline*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *The*

Merry Wives of Windsor, The Patrician's Daughter, The Rivals, The Love Chase, A New Way to Pay Old Debts, Jealous Wife, School for Scandal, &c., &c., which were played to the end of the season.

On the 19th January, 1858, in about the middle of the season, he produced, as has already been intimated, Macbeth at Her Majesty's Theatre. It was the first of a series of festival performances in honour of the nuptials of Her Royal Highness the Princess Royal of England with His Royal Highness the Crown Prince of Prussia; and in February The Patrician's Daughter was acted, for the first time for some years, Mrs. Young playing Lady Mabel Lynterne, and Phelps, as before, Mordaunt.*

On 25th March, for his benefit, he acted Virginius and Young Rapid, and certainly astonished many good judges of acting who were present. One gentleman, a perfect stranger, said to one of the present writers, he could not have believed that it was possible for the same man to have played two such opposite characters, much less on the same evening, so finely, as he considered the first was quite equal to Macready's performance of that character, and the second as mercurial as anything he had ever seen at the hands of Charles Matthews. He was an old play-goer, and told the same writer he had seen every actor of note for thirty years.

* I remember vividly a circumstance which occurred at one of the first three performances when sitting in a private box over the stage with the author, Dr. Westland Marston, and his wife, viz. after one of Mordaunt's fine speeches, which brought down tremendous applause, a stalwart fellow in the gallery with stentorian lungs (and who always seemed to be in the gallery of every theatre in London that Mr. Phelps went to) shouted out in broad Devonshire dialect, "Where be Charles Kean now?" which brought down thunders of applause, and which continued off and on till the curtain fell—I think the end of the third act—when Mr. Phelps was called before the curtain, and received a perfect ovation, the entire audience rising. The other two acts went in the same way. I remember Dr. Marston and myself exchanging glances when the gallery auditor shouted out, and his stating to me a little further on, "Phelps is playing Mordaunt splendidly, and certainly better than when he first acted it; he did not *quite* satisfy me then."—W. M. P.

1858—1859.

The fifteenth season commenced on 11th September, 1858, with *Othello*, followed by *The Jealous Wife* and *Richelieu*; and on 22nd *The Provoked Husband* was produced, for the first time for a considerable period. On this performance the following from the pen of Professor Morley may be acceptable to the reader:—

“At Sadler’s Wells the play of *The Provoked Husband* has been produced this week, and here again we have had an example of the finish with which a company, well-trained to work together, may present a play demanding no little variety of talent. Sadler’s Wells has a reputation for its acting of old comedy as well earned as its credit for fidelity to Shakespeare. *The Provoked Husband* is an excellent example of the merit upon which this reputation has been based. Mr. Phelps here presents a play, not because it provides a notable part for himself, but because it brings out all the forces of his company. Two renderings of the part of Lord Townley are possible: one, which is not the one selected, contains a display of restless uneasiness, breaking out here and there into passion; an effective and therefore a tempting version. In the other rendering, which Mr. Phelps has chosen, Lord Townley appears with all the dignity and self-command proper to a nobleman of the old school, who had a warm, strong heart, but had learnt how to contain his passions. The repose and dignity thus given to the figure of the husband serves as an admirable foil to the wife’s restless levity; just as the worldly sense of Manly in the play is a foil to the folly of the Wronghead family. We are disposed to think too that this reading of the part of Lord Townley gives a solidity of light and shade to the whole play, which would not be derived from the old-fashioned proprieties of courtship between Manly and Lady Grace. And while Mr. Phelps denies himself all but the subtler indications of the feelings by which he, as a stately lord, is not to be compelled into loud bodily passion, he adds brilliancy to the part of Lord Townley. If the play has been produced for the special increase of any one artist’s reputation, it has been produced for the credit of Mrs. Charles Young. This lady won her first laurels at Sadler’s Wells, and is provided there with the best opportunities of triumph. In *The Provoked Husband* she is as truly the high-bred lady as her husband is the high-bred lord, but she is the lady who floats lightly on the surface of society, while her sedate lord is one of its foundations. Lady Townley is, perhaps, the part in which Mrs. Charles Young has found herself most free to exercise her skill. Mr. Marston, always a judicious actor, did his duty by the part of Manly. The other parts in the play are all well filled.”

On 25th September *The Winter's Tale* was again produced, and *Hamlet* on 2nd October; on the 9th, *Werner*, and on 13th, *The Hypocrite*, in which Phelps appeared, for the first time, as Dr. Cantwell. The two following criticisms from the pens of F. G. Tomlins in the *Morning Advertiser*, and Bayle Bernard in the *Weekly Dispatch* respectively, refer to it:—

SADLER'S WELLS.

“During the long period that Mr. Phelps has had the dramatic management of this theatre, he has every season given a new study of some peculiar and prominent character of the drama. For the last few years he has given portraiture alike from comedy as tragedy; and his Sir Pertinax Macsycophant and Bottom the Weaver stand out as finely as his Lear and Macbeth. This extensive reach of character gives him full title to rank with the very highest of his art, and shows that he is a genuine actor, having a complete power of varied personation, a faculty by no means so common as might be supposed, seeing that the genuine art of acting is entirely based upon it.

“Last night the by no means excellent play of *The Hypocrite* was produced, that Mr. Phelps might add to his portraiture that of the renowned Dr. Cantwell. In this character the elder portion of the present generation can recollect Dowton, and in later times, Farren; but Mr. Phelps's portraiture differs from both, and is entirely original. There long lingered on the stage the tone and canting style of the original, who was improperly supposed to have sat for the delineation; but this Mr. Phelps very judiciously abandons, and so far from mimicking the former tone of the conventicle, he plays it as a consummate humbug, who happens to have taken the formula of religion to carry on his impostures and villainies. Such a villain! He might have been a soldier, like Iago, or a trader, like Shylock.

“Taken in this view, it is a consummate piece of acting, in which not a motion, a tone, or a glance is made that does not help to express the base and Jesuitical nature of the wretch. His affected meekness, his overwhelming appearance of self-denial, his crawling humility, and, at last, his malignant audacity, were given with a master's art, and it is a delineation well worth seeing. Monstrous impudence and consummate craft have always a degree of humour in them; and this portion of the *vis comica* was admirably introduced; and many were the roars of laughter at the audacious readiness with which the scoundrel eluded exposition. As played by Mr. Phelps, there is nothing offensive to the truly pious mind, for there is no mimicking any existing mode of religious utterance. Dr. Cantwell with him is simply a consummate impostor, who adds to his hypocrisy the basest treachery and ingratitude, and happens to have adopted religion as a cloak to his villainies.

“The play was altogether well acted, and, of course, completely put

on the stage. Mrs. Charles Young, as Charlotte, performed the long and elaborated part with great *naïveté* and sprightliness, and Mr. Marston was an elegant and joyous Colonel Lambert. Mr. Charles Young gave Mawworm a touch of ruffianism that was effective, and played it so as to procure the usual amount of laughter; though it is in reality the objectionable part of the play. Mrs. Marston was very truthful and clever as old Mrs. Lambert, and Miss Atkinson sufficiently demonstrative as the Young Wife. Mr. Rayner, who has considerable power in characters of an heroic kind, seemed quite out of place as Sir John Lambert; nor did Mr. Belford, generally so amusing, shine as Darnley the lover. The house was well attended, and the audience, as usual, deeply attentive and loudly applaudive. The grand Shakespeare revival this year is to be Henry V., which is in active preparation."

"The comedy of The Hypocrite, after a slumber of some years, has been revived by Mr. Phelps, and with a success which promises to render it a lasting member of his repertory. We scarcely need remind our readers that this grand protest of Molière against clerical imposture has an historical celebrity. Undergoing many changes in its exposure of religious falsehood, and addressed with equal vigour to various phases of fanaticism, it has done good service in the past, and still remains a weapon of undoubted weight and sharpness for employment in the future. We wish we could indulge the hope that such a need was a chimera; but recent events have made us doubtful. If it be true that the strongest passions are the most liable to abuse, the last year or two have not been wanting in emphatic admonitions. If Molière had to attack his Jesuits, Colley Cibber his Nonjurors, and Bickerstaff, still later, his Ranters and Mugglestonians, our own day has its Tractarians and its Romanizing clergy, whose influence in the family is quite as much to be dreaded as that of the Cantwells of past ages. It is on this ground we regard this play as a good dramatic antidote, and a specific, in some respects, for the St. Barnabas infection. It is curious to note its vigour when originally prescribed, if it may be measured, as are medicines, by the resistance it encountered. The storm the Tartuffe created it is scarcely possible to conceive. It roused the wrath of all the pulpits, awoke the thunders of the Sorbonne, and laid all its readers or beholders under the ban of excommunication. Molière never dreamt of the hornet's nest he was upsetting. 'I had attacked pretenders,' said he, 'of all sorts, and simply excited laughter; but the moment I touch these gentry, I find I am anathematized.' Even the pious Bourdaloue was to be seen in the ranks of his antagonists, and a twin eminence, the great Bossuet, in his *Maximes sur la Comédie*, found it necessary to dwell especially on the irreverence of Molière. The illustrious Condé thought his offence capable of a much simpler solution. When Louis XIV. was astonished that people complained of the Tartuffe, whilst they flocked with such avidity to see the Scaramouche Hermite, 'Why, Sire,' replied the

Prince, 'the Scaramouche merely attacks such things as Heaven and religion, for which the Jesuits care little; whilst Molière, you perceive, attacks these gentlemen themselves.' It is also curious to recall a fact in connection with the original of the *Tartuffe*. This was a certain Abbé de la Roquette, according to good authorities, a friend of the Duchesse de Longueville, who became afterwards Bishop of Autun. When, some century or so subsequently, Talleyrand succeeded both to the bishopric and to the great traits of his predecessor, the elder Chenier, in an epigram which delighted the Parisians, showed that the political *Tartuffe* had far exceeded the religious one. The second version of this play was as great a triumph as the first. When the accession of the House of Hanover disturbed the sense of 'Divine right' in the breasts of some half-Catholic divines of the Church of England, their refusal to take the oaths gave them the name of Non-jurors. Their destiny after that was thought to be France and the 'Mother Church'; but as many remained in England, and were said to be mixed up in constant Jacobite conspiracies, their name became a synonym of Jesuitry in England, and suggested a lucky notion to the ready wit of Cibber. To transform *Tartuffe* to a Nonjuror, introduce him to an English family, and barb the religious satire with political allusions, was a task that the clever dramatist had no trouble in discharging. The hit was something wonderful. It crowded the theatre nightly, and the adapter was rewarded both with profit and distinction. The play was looked at in the light of a great party triumph, and it made him—Poet Laureate. It is true it had its offsets. It obtained him another honour. It was unquestionably the means of his figuring, not long after, as the hero of the *Dunciad*. Pope's religious feeling may very well be questioned, seeing the company he kept; but it is very likely he imagined it was in defence of his Catholicism that he winged his last and sharpest dart at the reputation of poor Colley. Another thirty years—and again Molière was wanted. The great religious revival which had suddenly appeared in England gave rise among the ignorant to many absurd exaggerations, which were not only justly felt to degrade religious dignity, but to serve as an efficient screen for the selfish and designing; and again the *Tartuffe* was thought to be the best corrective for the evil, and an expert practitioner, in Bickerstaff, was ready to compound the dose. The *Tartuffe* then at length became transformed into *The Hypocrite*, and in this last metempsychosis was permanently added to our drama. It is but justice to this play to say it is one of our most perfect adaptations. It possesses merits in regard to England not to be found even in Molière. Of course, it wants the exquisite verse and higher polish of the original—the elegant gaiety and insight which are so special to its writer—that union of force and delicacy in depicting comic passion which led Boileau to think his genius the very rarest of his age. Molière, we need not say, next to Shakespeare, is the greatest comic poet of the world; next to Shakespeare and Cervantes, perhaps the greatest comic genius. If less various than Shakespeare, within

his range he is as profound. He digs as deep, if but in one field—that of elegant society. If the painter of the Court and the *salon*, rather than our universal nature, he sees types in all he pictures, and beating hearts beneath brocades. Still Molière has his defects; his plays turn upon one trait or passion—avarice, pedantry, or hypocrisy; he can expand but one idea. He has little incident and less construction; whilst his *dénouements* are generally the clumsiest imaginable. Nor is Tartuffe his greatest play. It has neither the humour of the Femmes Savantes, the gay audacity of his Don Juan, nor the grandeur, in all respects, of his masterpiece, The Misanthrope. The Hypocrite is not only more active than the original, but it is more various in character; and in that of Charlotte, especially, is unquestionably superior. Charlotte is as much beyond the meagre drawing of Marianne, as Molière is beyond the frigid soul of a Regnard. She is worthy of Molière himself; of his Angelique, undoubtedly, if not of his Célimène. She is one of the happiest legacies of the comic spirit of the past century. She has all the pleasant wilfulness which characterizes Cibber, combined with the good breeding which is always to be found in Bickerstaff. The acting of this play was very equal and excellent. The Dr. Cantwell of Mr. Phelps is his last comic acquisition, and we venture to surmise it will not be the least enduring. It is a very original conception, and loses nothing of its force from the minuteness of its finish. We need not remind our elder readers what this character was with Downton—one of the many that for fifty years he made exclusively his own, and perhaps the one particularly which we thought would leave us with him. Mr. Phelps's is so very different, and yet so happy a conception, that it only affords another instance of how temperament and genius may place a character with equal justice in the most opposite points of view. The Cantwell of Downton was one of those oily, smooth-faced, plenteous sons of heaven of which the literature of the last century affords so many types—a good man, who had grown substantial from superior peace of mind; a human goatskin, that had expanded from the ferment of the spirit within it. Mr. Phelps inclines to moisture rather than to substance. His Cantwell is a sniveller—a piece of pious drivel, whose soul, like a ripe plum, with the least pressure exudes and trickles. You see his eyes are as well supplied as if they had a contract with the New River. He is an everlasting martyr to the wickedness of those about him; the saint—his friends describe him—tied to the faggots of bad society. When not in tears he has a drawl of such slow and broken mournfulness that it threatens every moment to give way to a gush. How indicative of the sufferer, and how provocative of sympathy! His face, too, has a fixed dejection, quite in harmony with such endurance; his jaw a listless dropping, as though incapable of remonstrance; whilst his constant pressure of his heart, in averment of his sincerity, adopts a form that really looks like an involuntary confession. His fingers spread upon his breast till they resemble the claws of a wild beast. His scene with Lady Lambert was singularly good. The false drawl

with which it opens gradually ceasing as it proceeds, accents deepening unconsciously into tones of real passion, his face kindling and growing plastic, till, in every twitching of his features, and even jerking of his chair, his whole nature stands before you. The scene with Charlotte, respecting the dowry, was scarcely less significant, whilst his unmasking at the end had a hard and a stern audacity that seemed a natural revulsion—that of a scoundrel who enjoyed his return to open villainy. The Charlotte of Mrs. Young was a worthy accompaniment of this performance. We have seen this lady on no occasion give such evidence of comic genius. Indeed, we have had misgivings whether her sympathies were not wholly serious. She has a pensiveness at times which might warrant such a fancy. But on this occasion we were undeceived. Anything more playful or more pointed, more buoyant or more sweetly wilful, we have not had the pleasure of beholding for some years. It was a very faithful and finished effort, and served to deepen the conviction which we share with so many others, of the injustice which keeps this lady from a home at the West End. We are aware of the fellow injustice—the robbery thereby of this theatre of her services; but really this is a penalty Mr. Phelps must be content to pay. His theatre is almost the only school of acting in the metropolis, and for some years past we have been accustomed to see the birds trained in his nest take wing westward as soon as he had taught them self-sustainment. Mr. Charles Young's Mawworm, as we are unable to praise, we will not linger over to condemn, beyond saying it is one of the poorest we have ever been doomed to witness—hard, stagey, and traditional, without earnestness or humour. How inferior to his Pistol, which, if somewhat over-acted, had nevertheless a true conception! Mr. and Mrs. H. Marston involve us in the old monotony—every praise is to be accorded to his manly view of the Colonel, and her perfect and at present unrivalled picture of the devotee. We must not omit either to refer to the intelligence and gracefulness of Miss Atkinson's Young Lady Lambert, the pleasant fidget of Mr. Belford's Darnley (Mr. B. is an actor of great promise), and the true feeling which Mr. Seyton contrived to throw into so slight a sketch as the disinterested Seward. The house was well attended, and the play was received throughout with an observation and enjoyment which did all honour to the audience."

Professor Morley in the *Examiner* thus described the performance:—

"Our English Tartuffe, Bickerstaff's Hypocrite, has been revived at Sadler's Wells with more than the usual success. It is a bright old comedy, with a brisk dialogue, well defined and amusing characters, and a hard hit at the mean traders in piety, whom honest men detest more heartily than any other sort of sinner. Mr. Phelps's Dr. Cantwell must rank with his Sir Pertinax as a particular success; one of the personations which give strength to the argument of those who

believe that his *genius* for his art is most conspicuous as a comedian. The 'make up' of the character is wonderfully good: the actor has transformed his face, and a German critic might spend a chapter on discussion of the artist's fine æsthetical treatment of his own nose.* A couple of touches of black paint have given the effect of a true Cantwell pinch to the nostrils. The hypocrite's mouths that he makes in speaking; the large hand, with its outspread grasping fingers, that he lays upon his heart in protest; the houndish snuffing of the air with which he scents a frailty in his patron's wife; the change when he is unmasked to a vulgar brutality of tone that without one touch of caricature expresses the lowness of his position among men and beasts; his coarse, excited triumph, and his miserable collapse when all his schemes have crumbled about his head, and he has not the spirit of a mole to set against the fall of all his mole-heaps, and the crushing in of all the underground passages he has been mining so industriously,—are a few only of the points that attest the pains bestowed upon the study of this part by an accomplished actor. Mrs. Charles Young adds also a great charm to the acted play by the sparkle and refinement of her version of the lively, wilful, and kind-hearted Charlotte. There is no actress now in London who in comedy of this sort can so completely look her part, and at the same time maintain with equal vivacity the stage illusion, without making the spectator conscious of the artifices of the stage. Mr. Charles Young is the Mawworm, and the canting sermon is given by him in the true Bethel manner; and exquisitely quiet in its humour is the way in which Mrs. H. Marston, who has been making the most throughout of the part of the sanctified grandmother, here displays the force of habit. Miss Atkinson's Young Lady Lambert was a quiet, unobtrusive bit of acting, and Mr. H. Marston and Mr. Belford, as Charlotte's brother and lover, kept up the good humour of the play with an unflagging spirit. Not only were the individual actors equal to their parts, but numerous little concerted effects of grouping and stage management gave great life and spirit to the business of the scene."

On 23rd October Henry V. was produced again; on 6th November, The Wife; and on the 11th, Much Ado About Nothing. On the 13th, Macbeth; 17th, School for Scandal; 20th, The Bridal; 27th, Hamlet; 1st December, The Stranger; and on 4th, Henry VIII. On 11th December he produced The Wheel of Fortune, playing Penruddock for the first time, and making a great hit in it.†

* He had a marvellous power of changing the appearance of his face by doing very little to it, but he had also a marvellous foundation to work on.—W. M. P.

† I thought him superior to Vandenhoff, whom I had seen perform the character at Drury Lane during Anderson's management. I have no

On 8th January, 1859, *The Winter's Tale* was again acted, until 21st, with the exception of three performances of *The Hypocrite*.

The next fortnight was devoted to *Macbeth*, *The Stranger*, *Othello*, and *The Merchant of Venice*; then *King John* and *Julius Cæsar* were acted for a fortnight, and were followed the next two weeks by *Twelfth Night*, *Hamlet*, *Richelieu*, and *Romeo and Juliet*. Then for a fortnight, *Virginus*, *Henry VIII.*, and *Man of the World*; *Brutus*, or the *Fall of Tarquin*, was done for his benefit on 12th March, the season being wound up with some of the above-mentioned plays.

1859—1860.

The sixteenth season commenced with *Romeo and Juliet* on 10th September, Miss Heath from the Princess's making her first appearance here as Juliet; Mr. F. Robinson was Romeo; and Mr. Phelps, as usual, *Mercutio*. Mr. Marston was *Friar Laurence*, and Mrs. Marston, the *Nurse*. This piece was afterwards—on 30th November—played at Windsor Castle with the same cast.

On 14th *John Bull* was acted, in which he appeared as *Job Thornbury* for the first time.

On 17th September *King Lear* was acted; 21st, *John Bull*, and *Brutus* on 24th; on 5th October, *Romeo and Juliet* was again played, and then *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, and *Lady of Lyons* for ten days.

On the 18th October a new play by Tom Taylor was produced, entitled *The Fool's Revenge*, which was very successful, and had a long run. On it Professor Morley said in the *Examiner*, speaking of the author:—

“For Sadler's Wells he has written a play in blank verse, *The Fool's Revenge*, suggested by *Le Roi s'Amuse*, and *Rigoletto*. It is, however, really new as to plot, and in fact an original play, well designed and written with all care. A solidity of character is given to the Fool which accords perfectly with the genius of Mr. Phelps.

criticism by me, but I remember it was very highly spoken of, and drew money to the treasury.—W. M. P.

While the lips gibe lightly, the hands clutch at the Fool's bauble as if it were a sword. It is the instrument of his revenge, and the actor tacitly suggests this by the manner of its handling. The dignity and tenderness of Bertuccio's relation as a father with his child, the struggle of his revengeful spirit with the counsels of her simple piety and purity of heart, presently to be followed by the ferocity of exultation at what he believes to be the success of his relentless plotting, yield occasion for fine contrasts of dramatic colour. In the last act the Fool's glorying, the baseness of his triumph passing by swift stages, the terror of his doubt, the agony of his despair, employ incessantly the actor's energies."

Bayle Bernard in the *Weekly Dispatch*, after speaking of the play, which he did not like, said as follows:—

SADLER'S WELLS.

"We now pass to the pleasanter topic of the admirable acting of this play. The Bertuccio of Mr. Phelps is, without question, one of his most original and unique impersonations. The contrast between the real and assumed nature of the jester, though false, as we have shown in the drama, was recovered to truth in a great degree by the wonderful art which made so striking the grotesque humour of the one mood and the impressive pathos of the other. The burst of exultation at the close of the second act had a poetry in its passion which only wanted words to do it justice; but it was reserved for the last scene to afford Mr. Phelps his proper scope, and here we have no hesitation in saying that his acting was the very finest that it has been our good fortune to witness since the great days of Macready. All the changes and expressions which the foiled hunchback is involved in in that highly-wrought catastrophe—the triumph struck down to stupor, the stupor rousing to remorse, and the agony of terror which, forced to mask itself in laughter, chokes and blinds him as he strives to clutch or rush at something which will yet save his soul from blood—is such a masterpiece of acting, so distinct in every trait of it, and yet so harmonized and massive, that we feel it wholly out of our power even to indicate its effect. We must rank next his the also striking exertions of Miss Heath, whose scene of terror with the Duke was one of the most vigorous and natural pictures it was possible to witness. Mr. Marston made the most of the thankless character of the Duke. Mr. Robinson threw much grace into the mere outline of the poet; whilst Miss Atkinson gave to the Duchess (one of the best additions of Mr. Taylor) a dignity and vigour that were equally dramatic and historical. We must not conclude without adverting to the great merit of the painting by Mr. C. James, a young artist who is rapidly winning his way to the front rank of scenic painters. His interiors reminded us of Telbin, whilst his 'Square of Faenza by Moonlight' carried us back—it is not too much to say—to the palmy days of David Roberts."

On 19th November Macbeth was again done, and with The Stranger, Clandestine Marriage, Romeo and Juliet, and The Fool's Revenge, the performances were carried up to Christmas.

On Boxing Night The Lady of Lyons was acted, and then The Stranger, and Fool's Revenge, until 4th January, 1860. Then on 5th, Clandestine Marriage, which with Othello, The Fool's Revenge, Merchant of Venice, and Hamlet carried him on for another month; and during the next month, from 4th February to 5th March, King Lear, The Hunchback, Lady of Lyons, Othello, Macbeth, A New Way to Pay Old Debts, The Gamester, and Henry VIII. were acted.

During March, and until the close of the season, Richelieu, School for Scandal, Werner, and Twelfth Night were acted. On 17th March he played Coriolanus for his own benefit.

During the summer of this year he made an engagement with Mr. Harris, the manager of the Princess's Theatre, to appear there in a round of his favourite characters.

If we are not mistaken, he opened there in the middle of April in Sir Pertinax Macsycophant, for the following appeared in the *Examiner* of the 14th of that month :—

“In the interval between two of his dramatic seasons at Islington, Mr. Phelps, engaged at the Princess's Theatre, has been representing one of his favourite comedy parts, Sir Pertinax Macsycophant in The Man of the World. Sir Pertinax Macsycophant, pliant in flattery and hard in purpose, determined to grasp worldly success, and utterly insensible to degradation that is not accompanied with loss of worldly influence, is represented by the actor even in what must pass for the repose of his face when on the stage. The features are cunningly hardened, the keen eyes, and a certain slight but frequent turn of the head, with its ready ear and fixed averted face, shrewdly suggest an intent, secret watchfulness. Even when his schemes of family aggrandizement are being foiled by love and honour in his son, when the depths of his miserable passion have been stirred into an almost tragic agony of meanness, he commonly abides by the same habit of listening with open ear, keen watchful eye, and face impenetrable. Mean, selfish worldliness, utterly dead to the perception of a man's honour and dishonour, is all that has to be represented; but of this the actor seizes the whole range. If the house roars with laughter at the littleness of the passion, it has also to note with a more silent and more powerful emotion its intensity.”

This piece was followed by The Fool's Revenge, and then

Othello, on which latter we extract the following from the *Examiner* of 19th May:—

PRINCESS'S THEATRE.

1855
 "The Othello of Mr. Phelps in several respects varies from tradition; in a few respects, perhaps, it departs from the expression Shakespeare had in mind. Nevertheless, it is throughout consistent, and it takes a steadfast hold upon the sympathies. One of the chief merits of Mr. Phelps as an actor of Shakespeare is, that he studies each play as a poem, avoids all temptation to mere personal display, and directs attention to the poet whom he is illustrating rather than to himself as the illustrator. He has not the wonderful power that was possessed by Edmund Kean or Madame Rachel, and that is possessed also to some degree by Madame Ristori, of vivifying certain words or phrases with a thrill of genius that surprises suddenly the hearts of all who hear.* Edmund Kean varied in his exercise of this wonderful faculty. Sometimes when he played Othello, he would lift into a terrific portent of the future, roll forth as the boding thunder before a wild storm, the words to Cassio, 'But never more be officer of mine;' often there was a strange magic in his tone at the words, 'All my fond love thus I do blow to heaven;' but every description left to us of his entire performance shows that, as a whole conception, his Othello was more fitful in passion than consisted fairly with the 'noble nature' of the Moor. Mr. Phelps, depending little upon these flashes of expressive power which are the highest gift of nature to the actor, relies chiefly on study, taste, and a right sense of poetry. He forms to himself some clear and consistent view of each character he personates considered as a whole, and fills it up throughout by his acting in exact accordance with the outline he has traced.†

"Othello is described by his enemy as of 'a constant, loving, noble nature,' and before his jealousy Mr. Phelps shows this in him under the calm and regal bearing of a hero who is master of himself. In the third act this nature is represented battling with a fierce, suppressed emotion. The husband's torture is his own; the manly effort to repress open expression of his agony is to Mr. Phelps, as it has been to other actors, the great source of pathos, in this act. But Mr. Phelps holds that it was in Othello's nature to maintain this struggle against the weakness of loud outward complaint even to the last. His passion, painfully repressed, seldom breaks bounds

* I consider Professor Morley *slightly* in error in this respect, for his earlier critics all stated that he *did* possess that power, but did not often exhibit it, as it was against his creed to do so, especially at his author's expense.—W. M. P.

† Here he has hit it exactly, as if he had been told by Mr. Phelps the principle upon which he invariably acted.—W. M. P.

and passes into open fury. It does so, in the third act only, as the thought rises suddenly against Iago that he may be but a slanderer, or when some vivid suggestion of the defilement of Desdemona wrings his heart. In the scenes with Desdemona herself, still the suppressed agony breaks into rage but fitfully through fierce struggle for self-control, and only when her innocent words are made, by the poison of the slander, to suggest that she is altogether vile. Resolved upon her death, and that of Cassio, Othello, as read by Mr. Phelps, maintains in the murder scene the dignity of one persuaded that he executes an act of justice. When undeceived too late he does not break into a fury of despair, but stands with downcast head, stricken and dejected. When he hangs groaning over his dead wife he does not accept as a cue to his behaviour Emilia's counsel, 'Nay, lay thee down and roar,' but follows, here and throughout the scene, Othello's own description of himself, as

'One whose subdued eyes,
Albeit unused to the melting mood,
Drop tears as fast as the Arabian trees
Their medicinal gum.'

"With a cry of tenderness he dies upon his way to Desdemona's couch, and falls with his arm strained towards her.

"The curtain falls upon the death of an Othello who had all the dignity of nature, and obtained all the unbroken sympathy which Shakespeare meant to attach to the character. The reading has been true in the main, and poetical in detail; there is also, as we have seen, text to show for it. We think, however, that in the last scenes Shakespeare put into the mouth of Othello passages for which he expected from the actors of his day a boisterous delivery. (Edmund Kean is said to have here flung even the words of evidently quiet pathos into passion violent and loud. Mr. Phelps takes the opposite extreme, and avoids all noisy demonstration of Othello's suffering."

After these pieces he appeared in Richelieu, Falstaff in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and Hamlet, on which we further extract from the *Examiner* of 23rd June the following:—

PRINCESS'S THEATRE.

"We have been very glad to observe the thoroughness of the success of Mr. Phelps in Oxford Street—a success all the more genuine for having been gradual. At first there were thin houses, but as the new public warmed into acquaintance with an actor able to represent successively, and always admirably, characters so unlike each other as those of Sir Pertinax Macsycophant, Othello, Richelieu, Hamlet, and Falstaff, the interest in his performances has reached a point most satisfactory to all who estimate at its true and high value the profession of the actor. For some weeks past Mr. Phelps has been performing to full boxes and stalls, and to a crowded pit, while the audience

of the Princess's Theatre is very satisfactory. Several of the chief members of the Sadler's Wells company add their strength to that of the house, and Mr. Harris's own company is an effective one. Mr. Phelps is now enacting Falstaff, whom, as we have observed when speaking of his acting of this part at Sadler's Wells, he takes care to represent as more than a mere oily sensualist; he is a gentleman by social rank, and a wit whom, as he takes pride in the sharpness of his intellect, it is all the more pleasant for the merry wives of Windsor to outwit. The play is exceedingly well mounted on the stage, and throughout pleasantly acted.

"Mr. Phelps's Richelieu is one of the parts in which he is most faultless; and in reference both to this play and to the Hamlet it would be injustice to omit recognition of the growing interest taken by the audiences in the intelligent and unaffected acting of Miss Heath. The discipline of Sadler's Wells appears to have developed in this lady powers with which she used not to be credited, and she gains ground rapidly in her profession.

"We believe that we have never yet spoken in any detail of Mr. Phelps's Hamlet, but it is so well known as to need little criticism. Most carefully elaborated, it is yet entirely free from that manifest struggle for expression which made the Hamlet of Mr. Charles Kean toilsome to follow. It must surprise some of the old frequenters of the house to observe how easily and how like a true poem the play now runs. 4 Mr. Phelps never sacrifices anything to love of points. Hamlet's advice to the players he himself took long ago, and he is resolute never to spoil a line for so paltry a reward as ignorant applause. Yet he marks very distinctly the view taken by him of Hamlet's character, making great use of by-play for this purpose, and of the by-play of those who act with him as well as of his own. The feigned madness is marked by the strongest indications of this kind. In the interview with Ophelia, Mr. Phelps is so resolved to signify emphatically Hamlet's sense of being overheard that, not content with subtler indications, he causes the King and Polonius to advance for a few moments far upon the stage, in order that his glance towards them may be plain to every beholder. The by-play is in this way now and then justifiably obtrusive, but obtrusiveness is a fault with which the delivery of the words is never chargeable. Yet there is a full rich colouring of passion and emotion, that only once falls short of the occasion, namely, in the churchyard scene. In expressing Hamlet's passion over the grave of Ophelia, Mr. Phelps, we think, *comparatively* fails."

This summer season proved so successful (as already noted) and agreeable to both the manager and himself, that he agreed to act there the following summer of 1861.

1860—1861.

The seventeenth season, and first of Mr. Phelps's sole lesseeship, commenced on 8th September, 1860, with *As You Like It*, and on 12th, *The Hypocrite*, Mrs. Charles Young rejoining the company, and Mr. Hermann Vezin making his first appearance as Orlando. On the 15th *Coriolanus* was again produced, and on this we give Professor Morley's criticism from the *Examiner* of 22nd of that month as follows:—

SADLER'S WELLS.

"Mr. Phelps, who is now sole lessee of the theatre with which his name will be hereafter associated, fulfils at Sadler's Wells all those conditions which the Freiherr von Wolzogen, in the dramatic criticisms to which we referred last week, considers necessary to the honest progress of the drama. He acts national plays in a house small enough to allow all to see, though few may appreciate, the subtlest and most delicate shades of expression proper to the art of the actor; he has a company of performers trained and accustomed to support each other steadily, and peculiarly able to present each play as an effective whole. When the curtain falls upon a play at Sadler's Wells, the audience has not only seen a sight and heard much sound, but it has felt, when the play was Shakespeare's, an entire poem; most of the audience have also felt it more completely than it could have come home to them from their own unassisted reading. The unhallowed union of music with the drama, so deeply abhorred by M. von Wolzogen, is not sanctioned at Sadler's Wells; and while the stage is always well appointed, scenic display is made, even to a remarkable degree, expressive of poetical intention.

"Mr. Phelps (who to-night plays *Hotspur*) has opened the campaign with two plays of Shakespeare—*As You Like It* and *Coriolanus*. The former of these we have not yet seen, but of the *Coriolanus* we can speak from our own knowledge. Here as ever the first mention is due to the whole truth and harmony of the representation. The actors are all in accord together; and although the company includes few bright particular stars, yet each does justice to the dignity of his profession. Mr. Barrett is a genial and genuine Menenius Agrippa; Mr. Hermann Vezin, a new member of the company, who, we believe, has earned honours as first tragedian in a transpontine house, is a discreet and serious Aufidius, who mars nothing by errors of commission, and errs only on the hopeful side by under-acting of his part. The Roman mob, admirably grouped and disciplined, cannot possibly be represented by a better First Citizen than Mr. Lewis Ball.

"The little part of the household friend and gossip of the women in

the hero's household is spoken delightfully by Mrs. Marston. Miss Kate Saxon, an intelligent actress, who supplies one of the losses of the company, delivers with all due simplicity the few sentences that fall to her lot as the wife of Coriolanus, and expresses quietly by her stage bearing the modest, faithful gentleness that follows, strong in love, the warrior's career. As the proud mother of the prouder son, Miss Atkinson also labours her best, but she does not achieve her best. When she desires with face and gesture to express scorn, it not seldom happens that she fails to suggest more than intensity of spite. For this reason her Volumnia is wanting in some of the dignity with which the character has been invested by the poet. It is a hard trial, no doubt, to measure the expression of a Roman mother's pride with the show of pride that a man can put into the part of Coriolanus. Pride, after all, is not a woman's passion, for what passes by the name is often vanity.

"The pride of Coriolanus is heroic, and is a man's pride, from which vanity is altogether absent. His own praises are irksome in his ears. That which he is, he is; and it is little in his simple estimation of himself, for he esteems himself by what he feels the power of becoming. Upon comparisons between himself and the base multitude he never wastes a thought. It matters not at what level other men are content to dwell; his mind abides on its own heights. Thus when Caius Marcius in the camp, beset with irksome praises that he is compelled to hear, is named Coriolanus, and there is added to this honour the exhortation, 'Bear the addition nobly ever,' Mr. Phelps represents him stirred by the warning into a large sense of what is in his soul, and lifted upon tiptoe by his soaring thought. The same action gives grandeur to the words,

'I'd rather be their servant in my way
Than sway with them in theirs,'

and is afterwards more than once used, not ostentatiously, and never without giving the emphasis intended.

"As in the action of the piece that pomp of processions with the constant noise of drum and trumpet which in the good old days of the drama formed a prominent part of the play is subdued, and made to follow instead of leading the march of the poem, so in the action of Coriolanus himself it is remembered that heroic pride is self-contained. The passion least to be concealed by it is impatience of subjection to the shifting voices of the mob. The pride of Coriolanus is a virtue overgrown, and is associated with the utmost purity and tenderness of home affections; next to his love of honour is his love of home. The two qualities belong naturally to the same mind, and in the end of this play we are left unable to determine which feeling has prevailed. It is meant, doubtless, to be questionable whether love would have conquered had not the mother made her son—as Mr. Phelps does not forget to mark very distinctly—flinch at such a pleading as,

‘Say, my request’s unjust,
And spurn me back : but, if it be not so,
Thou art not honest.’

“The expulsion of Coriolanus from Rome is presented in a capital stage picture by the grouping of the mob, and here the actor’s reading of his part is marked very distinctly. He had been wrung by the urgency of his friends and the commands of his mother to attempt to flatter into quiet the excited mob. The attempt to do this is presented with all signs of suppressed passion, and impatient, yet in itself almost heroic, endurance of what is really intense torture. When the tribune calls Coriolanus traitor, he recoils as from a blow, and lets his wrath have way. But when the mob raising their staves expel him from the city, he mounts proudly the steps from which as from his mental height he looks down on them, and he is lord of himself, lord as he feels of Rome. With a sublimity of disdain he retorts on them that ‘I banish you’ which Edmund Kean erred in delivering with an ungovernable passion.

The scenic effect of the view of Antium by the light of the rising moon, when the banished Coriolanus haunts the door of Aufidius, his deadly enemy, is contrived to give colour to the poetry. But there is no scene in the play more impressive to the eye than the succeeding picture of the muffled figure of Coriolanus, seated by the glowing embers of the brazier that represents his enemy’s hearth. It is one of the omissions of Mr. Vezin that he makes no sign whatever when the stranger-guest discloses his name, though he had vowed that

‘Where I find him, were it
At home, upon my brother’s guard, even there,
Against the hospitable canon, would I
Wash my fierce hand in his heart.’

If nothing more were to be done, hands tightly clenched at the hearing of the name, slowly relaxing till they are held out in friendship with the words

‘O Marcius, Marcius,
Each word thou hast spoke hath weeded from my heart
A root of ancient envy,’

would be better than absolute inaction.

“We must not dwell much longer upon this performance. Let us add only that the meaning of the heroic close furnished by Shakespeare to the play is well brought out at Sadler’s Wells. The lofty pride that when defied by Rome had defied Rome herself, and was to set a foot upon the neck of the world’s ruler, had, after painful struggle, knelt at the voice of a mother, yielding nobly when to yield was dangerous, if not mortal. When Coriolanus has attained his greatest height, Aufidius, fallen to his lowest, has sunk into a dastardly chief of assassins. All hearts are thus secured for sympathy with the pride with which, as Mr. Phelps shows us, the hero resents the taunt of an

enemy basely triumphant. His whole frame enlarges, and his hands press on the expanding breast as he cries

‘Measureless liar, thou hast made my heart,
Too great for what contains it!’

And so at last the loftiness of his disdain carries all sympathies with it when he whets the swords of the conspirators by telling them

‘How, like an eagle in a dove-cote, I
Fluttered your Volsces in Corioli:
Alone I did it.—Boy!’”

On 22nd September the First Part of Henry IV. was again produced, and on the 29th The Winter’s Tale, which was acted for a week. On 6th October, Cymbeline; 10th, The Winter’s Tale; 13th, Othello; and 17th, Cymbeline. On 20th October The Tempest was again played. On 3rd November, Hamlet; 10th, Macbeth; 15th, Rivals; 17th, Virginius; and on 21st Werner was produced, for the purpose of introducing to the London stage his son Edmund, who appeared in the character of Ulric, and whose *début* was a genuine success, for the full particulars of which we refer to the following notice taken from the *Weekly Dispatch*, and written by Bayle Bernard:—

SADLER’S WELLS.

“No pursuit more than acting has attested the fact that genius is a quality which does not run in the blood. Our stage does not present more than two or three instances of eminent actors who have been followed by eminent sons. Even moderate stage talent has not been hereditary. Nearly every specimen we have seen in the second generation has been a sad anti-climax. We must remember, however, the somewhat remarkable fact, that actors, for the most part, have been averse to their children taking up their own art. Whether this has been owing to their experience of the difficulties attending it, or to their sense of an ideal which their sons did not reach, it would be vain to inquire. Their paternal ambition has, in several instances, been curious enough. Forty or fifty years since, the leading desire of comedians was to send their sons into the Church. Fawcett, Bartley, Charles Young, Charles Kemble, and even Braham, were seen assiduously devoting their scions to surplices. In some cases, doubtless, the aim was well founded, but in many, we fear, it was simply a morbid concession to sectarian prejudice. The stage was denounced by the Mawworms as a sinful pursuit, and the actors accordingly, after the old Jewish precedent, offered their first-born to Heaven as a sort of atonement for their personal guilt. We believe the age is outliving any such shallow delusion. We believe the stage in itself to be as pure and moral a pursuit as any existing, and as capable of being

rendered a great aid to society. Acting is not only an art, but of all arts is that which deals most intensely with our common humanity—that humanity, be it remembered, which Christianity bids us love, and civilization displays as an upward expanding capacity—and which, presenting the reflex of our nature in others—by unveiling the sources of thought and emotion—gives us the most vivid sense of what is best in ourselves—of what our wills should accept and our sympathies follow. This may sound like a platitude, but its repetition is necessary when the ignorant cant against acting is still so rife in our pulpits. It will be inferred, therefore, that we regard with no ordinary interest, and as something more than the great theatrical event of a week, the *début*, on his own stage, of a son of Mr. Phelps. We can have no occasion to repeat what we have so often recorded—our sense of the claims of the latter both as an actor and manager. As an actor he is undoubtedly at the very head of his art, being, of Shakespeare especially, one of our profoundest interpreters; whilst as a manager we are quite sure we only convey the general feeling, when we say he has done more to sustain the best claims of the drama than all the lessees of London for many years past. At his house distinctively, humanity and not its garb has been the end kept in view. The poet has been made the statue, and the tailor and painter the pedestal. And the result has been a full unbroken flow of success, extending now over a period of seventeen seasons, which clearly proves in his own case—as we have so often had occasion to insist on in others—that, in the age in which we live, policy and principle are identical things, and that that which is best in art is best also commercially. It is essential to add that the claims of Mr. Phelps by no means end here. He has exhibited a harmony of a still higher kind. He has displayed an integrity in all his private relations which has long and honourably shown that there was nothing repugnant in his art to the most estimable existence, nor any ground why the actor should not be able to exemplify as well as to teach. When, therefore, a man so accredited, both in public and private, brings his son before the world to partake his own labours, and to succeed, as we hope, to his best fame and fortunes, we confess we regard it as a tribute to the dignity of his pursuit which cannot fail to have its influence on public opinion, and ought to act as an example to his more timid brethren. This, of course, is to assume that such a step is well warranted, which, in the instance in question, it gives us great pleasure to say is very clearly the case. Mr. Edmund Phelps, in the first place, is highly favoured by nature. Tall and graceful in person, he has a pleasant expressive face, and a voice clear and resonant. His action certainly shows that he is entirely new to the stage; but if wanting ease, which, of course, is the pure result of experience, his natural manner is obviously manly and dignified. He seems to have all the best media which mind can require. Of his genius at present we can at best but conjecture. The character in which he has appeared, that of Ulric in Werner, affords him but a limited, though a well-defined scope. It presents a picture

of a strong will, coupled with reckless desire—a vehement temperament, unrestrained by either ideal or principle, which, however true of its period—the social convulsions of Germany, consequent on the Thirty Years' War—is naturally repellent, and only to be made attractive by the mingled vigour and dignity with which it is sustained. This sustainment it receives at the hands of its new illustrator, who, in the two important scenes—the urging Werner to flight after the commission of the murder, and the calm acknowledgment of the crime when charged with it by the Hungarian—rose easily and firmly to the entire demands of the author. His *début*, then, is to be regarded as a very decided success, and one that warrants us in indulging great hopes of his future. Of the Werner of Mr. Phelps it is perhaps the best praise to say that it is the nearest approach we have yet seen to the great achievement of its original. All who saw it at the hands of Macready were led on one ground or another to regard it as one of his most distinctive performances. Nature had contributed to this end in the vehement temperament of the actor—in his sensitive pride, his withered look, and his dignified bearing. If in the restless vehemence of the earlier scenes—the exasperation at wrong and suffering, and the unbroken pride of the fallen noble, which impressed on Macready's Werner the stormy mountain look of some old feudal ruin—Mr. Phelps could scarcely hope to surpass his precursor, in the later scenes, which, after all, are perhaps the most ideal, where his sense of the destiny working in the curse of his father is rendered more poignant by his paternal affection, Mr. Phelps presented a picture which could scarcely be heightened. The Gabor of Mr. Marston was also a striking performance, one of the most picturesque versions of the fearless Hungarian that we remember to have seen, and infinitely the best that the stage now possesses. Nor did the melodious voice and graceful bearing of Miss Atkinson fail to impart unusual interest to the mere sketch of Josephine. The excitement produced at this theatre by Mr. Edmund Phelps's first appearance will be readily conceived. A theatre packed to the roof is no unusual affair here; but it was one of those occasions on which a Sadler's Wells audience is only too happy to express its personal esteem for the manager, apart, we verily believe, from all professional likings; and his reception on this evening, together with that of his son, rose to one of those storms of enthusiasm which it is quite impossible to describe. We are happy to add that this enthusiasm has scarcely abated on subsequent evenings, now that both father and son have to rely on their professional rather than their personal merits."

This piece, with *The Wife*, *Richelieu*, and *Othello*, carried him up to Christmas. He played Julian St. Pierre, and his son Leonardo Gonzaga, in *The Wife*.

On Boxing and two following nights *Jane Shore* was enacted, and on 29th, *The Wife*. On 3rd January, 1861, *The Honeymoon*

was acted; and on 8th, *The Fool's Revenge*; 12th, *Hamlet*; 19th, *Winter's Tale*. On 24th he produced *Richelieu* by command of Her Majesty and the late Prince Consort at Windsor Castle. It was played by his own company with the exception of *Julie*, which was performed by Miss Heath, then a member of Mr. Harris's company.

On 26th January *King Lear* was again acted; and on 30th, *John Bull*; on 9th February, *Macbeth*; and on 14th, *As You Like It*. On 16th *King John* was again played for nine nights; and from 27th February to 22nd March, *Julius Cæsar*, *Othello*, *Fool's Revenge*, *Wonder*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Man of the World*. On 23rd Phelps took his benefit, and played *William Tell* and *Sponge*. To the end of the season, some of the above plays were again enacted.

In May, after Sadler's Wells was closed, he again went to the Princess's for the summer, he and Fechter acting on alternate nights. Reference to this has already been made when speaking of that gentleman. The following fine piece of criticism from the pen of Professor Morley on his *King Lear* appeared in the *Examiner* of 1st June:—

PRINCESS'S THEATRE.

"The *King Lear* of Mr. Phelps, which has been played in alternation with the *Hamlet* of Fechter, draws full houses to the Princess's. In the opening of the play the actor represents the Lear of the old legend. Infirm with age, he is led to his seat. His hand trembles, and everything indicates the weakness of body, in which a weak mind is working. Mr. Phelps acts the scene well, marks strongly the tenderness for Cordelia, and delicately traces a gradation through which Lear's mind passes, as his love for her turns to a wrath that is effectively expressed. The whole first act is an actor's triumph; the curse upon Goneril, spoken, as the whole character is conceived, with a sense rather of the pathetic than the terrible, being the best part of it. Nevertheless, it is not here that Mr. Phelps pleases us best. We miss, what we have never fairly seen upon the stage, the majesty of absolute dominion in the royal Lear, whom Shakespeare brought into grand contrast with the Lear in the storm, slave of the elements, 'a poor, infirm, weak, and despised old man,' who goes shivering to the straw of the hovel. If anywhere, the late manager of the Princess's, who delighted in spectacle, might in the first scene of *Lear* have piled barbaric pomp upon the stage. But he was apt at missing a poetical intention. Mr. Phelps does not, we think, make full use of all the hints given by Shakespeare to the actor for expressing the imperious

habit of King Lear who had grown old in despotic rule. Even his entry from the hunt, when at Albany's castle, with the 'Let me not wait a jot for dinner,' which Mr. Charles Kean interpreted as the words of a jovially hungry man (generally treating Lear at this stage of his tragedy as a comic character), Mr. Phelps turns to no account. In the first scene the impatient majesty upon which Shakespeare dwelt had been sacrificed to representation of the age and infirmity of which alone the legend teaches us. But the infirmity has in a great measure to be laid aside. The shaking head and trembling hands cannot be carried through the play. Thus there is double loss rather than gain in laying at the outset too much stress upon infirmity. There is, we think, another shortcoming in the early part of Mr. Phelps's Lear. With singular literalness Shakespeare indicates to the actor of Lear the exact course of the change to madness. It is preceded by a pang of terror in the close of the first act,—

‘O let me not be mad, not mad, sweet heaven!
Keep me in temper; I would not be mad!’

“There are well-marked struggles with the rising pang at his heart indicated throughout the scenes in the second act, where the character formed by long habit of rule overlies even the natural agony of the father. Of Kent set in the stocks by his son and daughter, the first exclamation is, ‘They durst not do’t,’ and in the scene which opens with their denial to speak with him, it is the wounded majesty that rages first, and the wrung heart that appears through it. The first act ended for Lear with terror lest he should go mad. In the second his last words are, ‘O fool, I shall go mad.’ In the third act the first scene on the heath is a sane frenzy, and towards the close of it, as majesty creeps to the hovel, Lear simply defines his state, ‘My wits begin to turn.’ He is not mad when in the next scene he reads one of the grand lessons of the play, praying in the storm outside the hovel, mindful of the world’s ‘looped and windowed raggedness’—

‘Take physic, pomp;
Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel.’

“Just before, when thinking of his daughters, he had shuddered and recoiled at the thought, ‘That way madness lies, let me shun that.’ But the night of exposure to the storm completes the ruin. ‘This cold night,’ says the Fool, ‘will turn us all to fools and madmen,’ and the wild talk of Edgar, in his assumed madness, precipitates the real madness of Lear. When he is talking with this philosopher, Kent urges Gloucester to importune him to go, because ‘his wits begin to unsettle,’ and when he is brought by Gloucester into the farmhouse, we are at last warned by Kent’s first words that ‘all the power of his wits have given way to his impatience.’ Now although Mr. Phelps gives a fine reading of the part, and delivers every passage so well that he is deservedly recalled by an enthusiastic audience after each act, we do not think that he contrasts sufficiently the royal state with the

abject misery ; the imperious way, strong in weak characters, with the lowest humility of the infirm, weak, and despised old man. Neither, we think, in the accession of Lear's madness, do we get from Mr. Phelps what, indeed, no actor in our time has altogether given, a full embodiment of Shakespeare's conception.

" But from the time that Lear enters with his robes washed almost colourless by the rain, a feeble old man, weary and witless, after his night's wandering under the storm, everything is exquisitely done, the story being read wholly with regard to its pathos, not to its terror. The king is utterly lost in the father. The wound to the heart has struck, as no hurt to the dignity of royal robes can strike a man. Majesty has been contemned in its rags. Humanity lives to assert itself. The quiet broken spirit, the strayed wits, the tender nursing and rocking of the body of Cordelia in the closing scene ; the faint interest in all but her by whose love Lear's broken heart was held together ; the tenderness with which he lays her down, as for an instant, while he lifts his hands to the throat in which the last convulsive throes of death is rising ; his quiet death, with his eyes, his pointing hands, and his last words directed to her lips, are exquisitely touching."

1861—1862.

Phelps's eighteenth and last season of management of Sadler's Wells commenced on 7th September, 1861, with *The Hunchback*, a Mrs. Bowers making her first appearance in Julia a fair success ; and on 12th *The Lady of Lyons* was enacted. On 14th, the Second Part of *Henry IV.* was again done, for the purpose of his son Edmund's playing the Prince of Wales with him in the fourth act, he himself playing again Justice Shallow as well as the King, and on 21st September he produced a version of *Louis XI.*, and played Louis for the first time, making a tremendous sensation by his performance of that character. It was an altogether different thing from Charles Kean's rendering of the part, and to prove this we insert two very exhaustive criticisms on it, by F. G. Tomlins from the *Morning Advertiser*, and Bayle Bernard from the *Weekly Dispatch*, respectively :—

SADLER'S WELLS.

" Casimir Delavigne's clever play of *Louis XI.* has, by slow degrees, crept on to the English stage. Originally written for a Parisian actor who had remarkable powers of characterization, it has been

adapted in various countries by actors who felt their genius lay in the same direction. If not the very first, the most noted of these adaptations for the English stage was that made by Mr. Charles Kean, when he was lessee of the Princess's Theatre; and whatever differences of opinion there might be as to that actor in other parts, it was universally allowed he was highly effective in Louis XI. There was much in the character that suited his particular idiosyncrasy and undoubtedly there was a mixture of the grotesque and the terrible, the absurd and the emphatic, to which he did ample justice. There have been other representations of this eccentric monster on our metropolitan boards, to whom it is not necessary to refer.

"On Saturday night Mr. Phelps, undoubtedly the ablest of our present actors, undertook the part in a version which we imagine has been specially concocted for this theatre. We cannot say any of the versions we have seen do justice to the original, and this one is certainly no exception. It is much contracted, and the language wants vigour and dramatic force. These defects, however, do not appear so obviously in the principal part, and the play is undoubtedly little better than a monologue, the interest of which does not rest in the actions or fortunes of the principal character, but in the mode in which it is represented.

"Mr. Phelps is the most deserving the designation of an actor of any one who has performed in our generation, for he impersonates; and, instead of subduing, as was too long the fashion, every character to his own peculiarities, he entirely adapts himself to the character he undertakes. This is truly the Protean duty of stage playing; and all avoidance of it is an acknowledgment of an incapacity for the art of acting. Mr. Phelps is, therefore, the most varied actor of the age, and has made to himself a long list of characters, which embrace the whole range of the drama, from Macbeth and Hamlet to Justice Shallow and Bottom the Weaver.

"The character of Louis XI. had naturally great charms for him, for it is full of changes and full of difficulties. The French author, with an extravagant and national love of contrarieties and of violent contrasts, has exaggerated even the extraordinary portrait which Philip de Comines and other historians have left us of the subtle and remorseless politician of the fifteenth century, who welded the various chieftainships of Gaul into the French monarchy. Louis XI. crushed the tyrannical nobility, destroyed their sovereign power, and raised up the *bourgeoisie* class to a position in the State. In doing this he certainly committed some atrocious acts, and generated the hatred of many classes and sects, who seem to have each delighted in representing him as a peculiar monster of bigotry, cruelty, and avarice.

"It was the cue of the French author to decry monarchy at the time of the production of his play; and it was then the fashion covertly to represent all possessors of crowns as odious. It was also the taste of the author and of his age to picture monstrosities and to

give to an assemblage of opposite characteristics the appearance of truth and a certain *vraisemblance*. The portrait of Louis XI. has been drawn on this principle, and it must be confessed, with great ingenuity; and though we may not be able to reconcile it with history, yet it is made consistent with itself:—Politie and passionate; Godless and bigoted; without a conscience, yet abjectly credulous; grovelling and insolent; mean and daring; a very reptile, yet with the power of evil and of creating terror which the serpent tribe possess.

“Here is a fine subject for the genius of histrionic art; here is a lay model which the talent of the artist can clothe with flesh and blood, and with so much of humanity as will make it pass muster for a veritable man. Mr. Phelps’s conception of this mass of baseness and revoltingness, as a whole, is conceived with his usual ability and sense. He takes a broader view of the character than his predecessors, and in so doing loses some of their smaller effects. His portrait is less angular and by so much less piquant; but it is far more historic and probable. We have nothing of the buffoon, and more of the politician and the king; and had the author been less intent upon producing small contrasts we should have had even more artistic contrariety, and the king and the self-confident ruler would have interchanged more fully with the horrid bigot and the grovelling coward. Macbeth and Hamlet are as full of strange contrarieties as Louis XI., but it has as yet been permitted but to one dramatist to weld the most extraordinary opposites of disposition into one character, and to condense a long political life into three hours’ representation.

“The grotesque, which occupied so conspicuous a portion of the personation at the Princess’s, finds, very properly, no place in Mr. Phelps’s delineation; but this very excellence will disappoint those who hunger after perpetual points, and prefer the intensities of effect to the broader and truer delineation of character. We certainly preferred the latter portion of Mr. Phelps’s performance to the earlier; for, though that was picturesque and full of excellent character, yet it lacked the intensity of the later part. The brain-sick fancies with which the diseased mind of the tyrant is filled, and the revolting images to which it gives rise, were intensely delivered; but the crowning excellence of the performance was the last act, which is as fine and pure a piece of acting as we have ever seen. The careworn king is fast wasting away from a world he is besotted with, to go to one filled with the phantom horrors which his guilty nature and cowardly heart suggest. Haggard and worn out, he assumes the kingly robes and puts on his feeble brow ‘the round and top of sovereignty.’ But his voice has changed to a deadly key; his pale and hideous countenance shows the fierce conflict of his passions, and tells us that the inevitable hour is nigh. He staggers; he falls on his couch; he changes to his chair of state. He will not believe in death; he juggles even with fate, and seems to hope that, dying, he can outface

the conqueror of all. The struggle comes, and he who kept all around him in awe is a lump of clay. 'Le Roi est mort—Vive le Roi.' All this was given without any of those contortions, or of those minute physical details which justly make many persons think such displays unseemly. The picture was fully conceived and broadly and artistically rendered, carrying with it a sense of dignity and awe. And when the curtain goes down on the dead tyrant and the hopeful successor, we feel we have had an historical and a suggestive lesson, and have witnessed a remarkable piece of personation.

"There can be little doubt that Louis XI. will pass permanently into that large class of characters of which Mr. Phelps has so valuable a *répertoire*. The play is in every way well and picturesquely put on the stage; but of the general acting there is not much to say, for the other characters are but stage puppets. Mr. Edmund Phelps has sufficient youth, appearance, and energy for the Duc de Nemours; Mr. Barrett was an efficient and emphatic Hermit; and Miss Murray, ladylike, as the very tame Marie. Of the more immediate followers of the king we can only say we earnestly wish they would keep more in the background. Coitier, the physician, was bold even to brutality, and swaggered in such a way that it is hardly possible even such a man as Louis would have put up with it. Tristan, the well-known creature and executioner, was represented as a kind of burlesque brigand, and conducted himself altogether after a very different kind of fashion to that which we imagine to be the truth. Probably he was a very bland, facile gentleman, whose only fault was a too obsequious obedience. Oliver, the barber, is not very prominent nor very offensive, but considering his profession he might have mitigated his eyebrows a little. The play in itself is uninteresting, and there is nothing but the extraordinary talent displayed in the performance of the chief character that can keep it alive. The house was crammed, and boundless in their approbation."

"The character of Louis XI., as traced by Casimir de la Vigne, was intended, it must be remembered, to subserve a party purpose. The poet was a Republican, who, after the three days of July, sought, by all means in his power, to throw discredit upon monarchy, just as his compatriot, Victor Hugo, in his *Le Roi s'Amuse* and *Ruy Blas*, endeavoured, with kindred zeal, to disparage a *noblesse*. In his desire to see a throne abolished as completely as the Bourbons, he felt justified, not only in selecting a tyrant as its type, but even in exaggerating his vices by the mode of their presentment. He was not reluctant to paint Louis XI. rather as a monster than as a man. Every excuse was to be suppressed, and every redeeming trait rejected, whilst every infamy and weakness were to be enlarged by being conveyed through the passionate medium of a drama. In the focus of its rapid action he collected all the sins and tendencies which had been spread over an entire life, and, thus distorted, placed the picture under the expanding lens of the emotions. There were two pleas at least which

could be put forward on behalf of Louis. In the first place, his ambition to rear an absolute throne on feudalism could propose the public good by putting an end to the blood and rapine involved in the struggles of his feudatories; and in the next place, his crimes, however atrocious, were those of his age, and owed their distinction a great deal more to their elevation than their rarity. Both Brantôme and De Comines are conclusive upon this point. His great adversary, Charles the Bold, was just as false and bloody as himself; and in respect to ordinary vices, from the meanest craft to the most wanton violence, his host of minor rivals, from the Constable St. Pol to the Duke de Berri, certainly competed with him to a point that left him no claim to pre-eminence. At the same time, he had some merits which he might almost call his own. He was no oppressor of his own lieges, however indifferent to the fate of others; and, arbitrary as he was, he gave way at the voice of his Parliament. He had some natural and healthy tastes, such as a love for agriculture and the chase; and, so far from being the morose and gloomy savage drawn by the poet, he showed no little comicality, and at times a positive *bonhomie*. The truth is that Louis XI. was rather a huge imperial oddity than, viewed in relation to his times, any vast moral distortion. Everything about him was strange, quaint, and anomalous. Whether in his person or in his spirit, he was a mass of contradictions. His head was too large for his body, his arms were strong, his legs were weak, whilst his mind was a *mélange* of the most positive extremes. He was almost equally compounded of cowardice and courage, of sound sense and superstition, of meanness and munificence, of good-nature and blood-thirstiness. He could show all these qualities in turn, and almost in the course of a single day, without either serving to restrain or modify in the least degree its opposite. But this strange, discordant being, at whose nature on the whole we can scarcely refrain to smile, however repelled by social aspects, is not the hero of the play. There he is presented as the mere monster, who, stamped with every villainy, and stripped of all excuse, is so denuded of even the grandeur which belonged to his ambition, that the impression we receive from him is one of entire meanness. The petty and contemptible mark his infamy throughout. Whether in his robbery of the poor peasants whose previous robber he has been punishing; whether in his abject terror before his enemy, or in his still more abject fear beside his doctor and his priest, the despicable stamps him quite as much as the revolting; and this was De la Vigne's design. In presenting this culprit as the type of a detested institution, he felt he could not deal it a severer blow than that of popular contempt. Such a character, of course, it was not difficult to assume in France, where, up to the present hour, its political purpose is detected; but it is quite clear that among ourselves, where it would be tried by natural standards, no little art was required in the actor to render its villainy endurable. With nothing heroic, or sympathetic, or even amusing in its features, how was it possible to make it impressive or even probable to English feelings. Mr. Charles

Kean solved this problem in a way that every one has acknowledged to be his most genuine achievement. His key to it is intensity. A character so untrue alike to history and humanity could only be treated in the same strain as a purely exceptional case of evil—could only be shown as a gigantic selfism, which had grown so delirious through indulgence, so lost to all moral consciousness by unlimited abuse, that even impending death, which roused its terrors, could not waken a sense of guilt, but merely a sudden agony at the cessation of its enjoyments. Such a character, it is obvious, could only be represented as a mass of passion; and passion, however animal, never fails to attract and kindle. Mr. Kean employed this instrument, and never to more purpose. He saw that in such an assumption intensity was truth, and this intensity he gave us to the very confines of burlesque. Every aspect of the Royal culprit was expanded to the point of exhaustion. If the King scolded a liege, he roared at him; if he seized a victim, he foamed with fury; if he trembled under the dagger of an enemy, he shrieked! It was the very excess of his expression which bestowed a sort of naturalness on the forced creation of the writer. However false to general standards, it was made consistent with itself. These particulars must be enumerated in order to enable us to do full justice to the arduous task and the indisputable success of Mr. Phelps. In essaying Louis XI. a double combat lay before him. He had to struggle with a first and great impression by another actor, and he had to do so in a far less striking, if a much truer and profounder form. Mr. Phelps's view of Louis is not that of the drama, but of history. He regards the King as a very anomalous and vicious man—but not a monster; as a mass of selfism, which, however triumphant, had not succeeded in destroying conscience, but, on the contrary, which moves before us under an hourly augmenting retribution. He presents the King to us without *furor*; without delirium, without enjoyment, as still clinging to his crimes, and even yearning to increase them, but overshadowed by the sense of a rapidly approaching doom, which will inflict the double penalty of their removal and requital. Now this view, which is not only the more human, but the more dignified and tragic, has to struggle, we must remember, at every point, with that of the play, which has been constructed to illustrate an entirely opposite state of mind. Mr. Phelps—not like Mr. Kean, who accepts the dramatist's conception—is as much fettered by the material given him as by the want of that which has been withheld. Whilst De la Vigne has failed to supply him with that strange anomaly described by history, whose mere grotesqueness, it is easy to see, would have been expanded by Mr. Phelps into a striking relief as well as truth, he presents a subject which the latter neither believes in nor accepts, but modifies in some measure at every point of the plot. He makes the King calmer and more conscious; less vindictive and less abject; with less terror before his enemy, less prostration before his priest. If equally revolting, he is less despicable, whilst the silent torture he is made to show, serves on the general impression almost to reclaim him

to our pity. This is a view which it must be admitted is far more human, if less striking, and one that testifies as honourably to the genius of an actor as the difficulties in its fulfilment form the measure of his success. At the same time it must not be supposed, because this conception is a more composed one, it is at all wanting in force. The mental power that is shown throughout is much too manifest for that, whilst in certain passages this quality combines with a physical vigour to produce an entire impression which we have never seen exceeded. Such is the close of the fourth act, when, on his escape from De Nemours' vengeance, the terror of the King conjures up the phantoms of a crowd of victims of his own, amidst whose glirings he rushes off in a sudden frenzy of remorse and horror. It is, however, the last act of the play which produces the great impression, and conducts a noble performance to a grand and adequate conclusion. It is the dying scene of the King, when tottering in, robed and crowned, as though endeavouring in his wild despair to awe even death into obedience, his sunken eye, his palsied limbs, and, above all, his choking voice, present a picture of retribution whose terrible grandeur we are quite confident has not been matched for many years. Altogether this is a performance so original and masterly that it cannot fail to become one of Mr. Phelps's best resources, and add another to the lengthened list of the great attractions of his house. Of its impression on his audience we can have little need to speak. It has filled the theatre nightly with eager and attentive listeners, who watch its progress with the keenest interest, and reward its object with the loudest summons at the close of every act. The De Nemours on this occasion is Mr. Edmund Phelps, whose youthful and manly bearing well sustains the spirit of its filial obligations, and whose denunciation of the tyrant in the scene of the fourth act was an evidence of vigour that was equally welcome and effective. The Dauphin was enacted by a Miss Ada Dyas, who seems to have intelligence and spirit; and all the other characters were very adequately filled. The play has been produced in a manner worthy of the theatre, with just that amount of truth and beauty which serves to sustain illusion in order to secure illusion's end."

On 5th October William Tell was acted; and on 12th, Hamlet; 16th, Richelieu; and on 19th, A Midsummer Night's Dream was again put upon the boards. On 2nd November Othello was acted, and the three following criticisms on that performance speak for themselves: the first from the *Morning Advertiser*, by F. G. Tomlins, the second from the *Daily Telegraph* of 4th November, and the third from the *Morning Herald and Standard*.

SADLER'S WELLS.

"The town seems beset with a desire to see Othello performed, for at every theatre where it is announced there is an overflowing audience. Mr. Phelps, as might naturally be expected, on Saturday night reproduced it, and gave his version of the jealous Moor. It is not the first time by many we, in common with the rest of the play-going world, have seen Mr. Phelps's personation of this important character; nor is there any great variation of his conception or delineation of it. His reading (as all his readings are) is marked by great sense and simplicity. He in no way seeks to strain the language to any unusual meaning; and, being well-versed in the language of Shakespeare, he interprets with great faithfulness and power.

"Mr. Phelps is, of course, not likely to be infected with any modern heresies of acting, and judges entirely for himself; but we cannot but fancy the recent tendency of the town towards the extreme of familiarity and realization has so far affected him that he takes more opportunities than ever of rendering in a familiar manner such parts of the text as admit of any such interpretation.

"His natural dignity, however, gives all the requisite sustenance to the character, and we think he admirably hits the *juste milieu* between stage pomposity and a common-place familiarity. Though he is as easy and natural as may be, he nevertheless understands that there is in the senate, on guard, and in public generally, something more of artificial manners than when unrobed in his harem he takes his ease.

"In the grand scenes of the last three acts, where the passion predominates, his great artistic power is shown, and his mingled rage and grief are finely expressed. He even is too slow, we think, in coming to the jealousy, but when it does come there is no mistaking it. The great and pathetic speech of the farewell to his occupation was given with consummate art and force, and the images rose one after the other into a grand climax, till they were all scattered by the last despairing line. This mixture of elocutionary power and deep feeling Mr. Phelps is probably the only man on our stage who can properly render; and it is the perfection of his art. In the death scene he adopts the usual business, and takes care to give all those well-known lines which mark so strongly the dreadful anguish of the madly jealous man; and this full rendering of the text brings out the deliberate and truly tragic nature of this agonizing scene. When clipped and curtailed it plays with the glib superficiality of a domestic melodrama. Take it altogether, Mr. Phelps's personation and enactment of this part is one the English stage may be proud of, and it need apprehend no foreign rivalry, nor any modern novelty of representation. There are very few persons, and certainly no actor, who can read our great dramatist with the correctness and profundity of Mr. Phelps.

“Of the general performance of the play we cannot speak approvingly; for with the exception of Miss Atkinson, who acted Emilia admirably, with great force, but with fine judgment and feeling, the cast was utterly inefficient. Mr. Conway, a new appearance, was unusually precise, not to say pragmatial, in Iago. Mr. Edmund Phelps was utterly humourless in Roderigo, and Mr. Villiers anything but seductive in Cassio.

“The scenery is extremely picturesque, and the audience were boundlessly expressive in their admiration.”

“Shakespeare’s tragedy of Othello, to which such unusual interest just now attaches, was produced at Sadler’s Wells Theatre on Saturday evening, with Mr. Phelps in the principal character. The performance was exactly what might have been expected from the popular performer whose talents have been so long employed in delineating the higher creations of our poetic drama. If Mr. Phelps does not strike out any fresh paths for himself, or present us with new readings of the text, he nevertheless gives us a vigorous and effective embodiment, which shows he has caught the true meaning of the author, and has no lack of capacity to give expression to that meaning. That he follows ‘tradition’ is a charge which can, of course, be made against him, and to which he must at once plead guilty. Thus in the Council Chamber he does not, like M. Fechter, affect an indifferent and careless air, as though at a *levée* or a *bal masqué*, but, mindful of the odious offence imputed to him, of the powerful tribunal before which he stands, and of the perfect purity of his own conduct, speaks with the earnestness of tone and elevation of manner befitting the place and the occasion. In the opening scene of the third act the fiery and impetuous Othello as represented by Mr. Phelps is at once excited by the innuendoes of Iago, unlike the highly-polished and well-bred Othello of the French performer, whose suspicions are not in the slightest degree aroused until special and direct allusion is made to the conduct of his wife. In the fifth act, too, ‘tradition’ is so closely adhered to at Sadler’s Wells that the strangling takes place behind curtains in an alcove at the back of the stage, and is preceded by no struggle between Othello and Desdemona, in which the latter rushes to the door and is carried back to the bed by the former, according to the directions laid down in M. Fechter’s ‘acting edition’ of the tragedy. Finally, Mr. Phelps does not force Iago down on his knees, and make a pretence of poignarding him, utterly forgetting that Lodovico, Montano, and the officers present would have prevented a self-condemned assassin from being guilty of such violence; but follows the text of Shakespeare, and, under cover of the narrative he relates of his adventure at Aleppo, disarms suspicion, and stabs himself before his arm can be stayed by those present. In this way is ‘tradition’ adhered to in the theatre to which we are referring; and we cannot help thinking that a truer and more poetic appreciation of the spirit of our great bard is thus displayed than can be

discerned in much of the 'innovation' to be witnessed in another establishment.

"Contrasting the performance of Mr. Phelps with that of M. Fechter, we may say in general terms that where the latter is weakest the former shows his greatest strength. What an effort, for instance, the French actor makes to give some effect to the terrible lines—

‘If I do prove her haggard,
Though that her jesses were my dear heart-strings,
I'd whistle her off and let her down the wind,
To prey at fortune.’

Yet how signally he fails to reach the climax of the passion they express. Mr. Phelps, on the contrary, merely yields himself as it were to the torrent of emotion flowing through his heart, and is borne along without any effort on its impetuous current. The same difference in the powers of the two actors was distinguishable in the delivery of the lines—

‘I had rather be a toad,
And live upon the vapour of a dungeon,
Than keep a corner in the thing I love
For other's uses.’

In all the more forcible passages of the play, in fact, where mad ungovernable jealousy and savage hate arouse the inborn fierceness of the Moor's disposition, Mr. Phelps showed his superiority over the French rival now endeavouring to portray Shakespeare's creations at the Princess's Theatre. Nor must the pathos of the English tragedian be overlooked in the comparison we are instituting. M. Fechter's pathos is certainly not that of a Moor; it is scarcely that of a *man*. It is rather the maudlin and hysterical emotion of a hero of French melodrama, who is continually whimpering and whining about his mother. There is nothing masculine about it, nothing which stirs the soul, nothing which commands respect and inspires sympathy. With what poor effect, again, M. Fechter utters the exquisite lines—

‘O now, for ever,
Farewell the tranquil mind, farewell content!
Farewell the plumed troops, and the big wars,
That make ambition virtue! O, farewell!
Farewell the neighing steed, and the shrill trump,
The spirit-stirring drum, the ear-piercing fife,
The royal banner; and all quality,
Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war!
And O you mortal engines, whose rude throats
The immortal Jove's dread clamours counterfeit,
Farewell! Othello's occupation's gone!’

"M. Fechter actually rises from his seat and declaims this passage much as he ought to declaim the address to the Senate; Mr. Phelps, on the contrary, although slightly overlooking its meditative and soliloquizing character, nevertheless utters it in a tone of heart-stirring pathos, besides giving full effect to the mournful music which seems

to echo through every line. But we need not continue our comparisons further. To sum up briefly, Mr. Phelps's performance of Othello is as superior to M. Fechter's in all that constitutes high intelligence and dramatic power as Shakespeare's Othello is in its fulness to the base and mutilated reproduction put forth by Ducis."

"Othello was performed at this theatre on Saturday night, thus giving the public an opportunity of witnessing still another reading of this famous part, one, however, with which they are already familiar, for the Othello of Mr. Phelps has long been one of his favourite characters, and one not unfrequently repeated to a Sadler's Wells audience. Without of course any especial care having been bestowed upon the present revival of this tragedy, it is placed upon the stage with appropriate care, and the scenery and dresses, although not new, are entirely in character, and the former painted expressly to illustrate the play. Some of the scenery is beautiful in every respect, and whenever exhibited deserves a word of notice. The earlier scenes in Venice and the subsequent ones in the isle of Cyprus are quite in keeping as well with local truth as with Shakespeare's text: of course allowing the modern practice to be a good one, which transfers the locality of the great scene in Act the Third from 'Before the Castle,' as it is in Shakespeare, to an interior. Such changes are allowable. Perhaps a fairer objection may be made to the gay and rather Parisian arrangement of the bed-room scene. Mr. Phelps's Othello, which has been played too often to call for criticism, is a sensible, broad reading of the part; a little more familiar in manner now in some of the scenes than it used to be, but forcible, manly, and dignified in the graver and more important ones. His performance is marked by intensity in the passages of deep feeling, and by energy in those which are more demonstrative. He steers a middle course between that view of the character which makes Othello yield at once to the suggestions of Iago, and that other which holds out against them till they are clearly and obstinately laid before him. In the last act, the fine elocution of Mr. Phelps enables him to conduct the business of the scene with all the gravity and richness of poetic illustration that Shakespeare has thrown into it, giving it the dignified air of tragedy rather than that of rapid action, which must characterize it when many of the more imaginative passages and lines which cannot be omitted without disturbing our ideas and outraging our ears, so accustomed to their beauty, are left out. It is the privilege of high Tragedy to be somewhat rhetorical, even in moments of the deepest passion. In some of the pathetic speeches which accompany and follow the death of Desdemona, the acting of Mr. Phelps could scarcely be surpassed. He makes his audience feel rather than perceive the poetry of the situation in its highest sense.

"A new Iago from the American theatres made his appearance on the occasion. Mr. Conway is evidently a practical actor, thoroughly acquainted with stage business, and has clearly taken great pains in

the study of the character. His manner, however, is characterized by too great familiarity, and a sort of homely style of delivering the speeches, that at times has an effect injurious to the gravity of the circumstances by which he is surrounded. He cannot be said to realize the wily Italian, nor in a poetic sense the persuasive honesty of Iago. Neither the Cassio of Mr. Villiers, nor the Roderigo of Mr. Edmund Phelps, contributed to the success with which the representation was attended. Sadler's Wells, as a Shakespearean theatre, is an admirable school of acting, but should not be rendered one in an elementary sense. The new actress, Mrs. James Rodgers, played Desdemona with a little too much elaboration in the earlier scenes, but displayed so much feeling, and such a sense of dramatic propriety in the later ones, that she cannot fail to prove an acceptable addition to the company. The Emilia of Miss Atkinson was marked by an admirable reading, and an amount of sensibility as well as power when required, that gave the highest importance to the character. Her acting on the discovery of Desdemona's death was full of expression, and elevated Emilia, who is too often represented as a mere vixen, into a more fitting companion for the 'gentle lady married to the Moor.' Mr. Phelps was called for at the end of the third act, but did not appear. At the end of the tragedy, however, he did so, in reply to an irresistible demand, and was most enthusiastically greeted."

On the 6th November, Second Part of Henry IV.; 9th, Winter's Tale; and on 13th, a new piece of domesticity, entitled Doing for the Best, was produced, in which Phelps played Dick Stubbs, a carpenter, something that Robson might have done, but which was of too slight a nature for him. It was successful as a piece of acting, but his audiences had been accustomed to have him through five long acts generally, and did not care for two. It must be admitted the piece did not draw money, and it was soon withdrawn.

On the 23rd, Richard III. was produced, for the first time for many years, and Colley Cibber's version was chosen, not the pure Shakespearean text.*

On 28th, John Bull was done, his son Edmund again playing Hon. Tom Shuffleton with success. On 4th December, The Merry Wives of Windsor was acted, Edmund playing Master Slender. On 7th, King Lear. On Boxing and two following

* For this I hold myself responsible, as, having seen Mrs. Warner's magnificent performance of Queen Margaret, I told him I was quite certain Miss Atkinson could not act it,—W. M. P.

nights Fazio was acted; and on 30th and 31st, *The Stranger*, Edmund playing Francis.

On 1st January, 1862, *Ingomar*, for three nights; on 4th, *Richard III.*; 9th, *Man of the World*; 11th, *Hamlet*; 15th, *Henry VIII.*; 18th, *Richard III.*; 22nd, *Merchant of Venice*; 25th, *Bridal*; 29th, *The Winter's Tale*. On 1st February, *Romeo and Juliet*; 6th, *Bridal*, his son Edmund playing *Amintor*; on 8th, *Macbeth*; on 12th, *Bridal*; on 15th, *Damon and Pythias*, his son playing *Pythias*; on 21st, *The Bridal*; 22nd, *Macbeth*; and on 26th, *Damon and Pythias*.

On 1st March he produced *Pizarro*, and this at the instance of his nephew, Edmund playing *Alonzo*.

On 15th he took his benefit, playing *The City Madam*, and closed the season on that night, which was the last of his connection with *Sadler's Wells* as manager. He had opened its doors eighteen years before without any fanfaronade; and now that his work was done, and a whole generation of men and women bettered by his labours, he closed them as quietly; for on neither occasion did he court recognition by the blare of trumpets.

Thus ended one of the most memorable managements on record, and the last real dramatic college in England became a thing of the past.*

We may be accused of having dealt rather largely in what some will call the language of unlimited panegyric; but when one runs one's eyes over the plays produced, and considers the manner thereof, one cannot come to any other conclusion than that the work done was prodigious and altogether superlatively heroic.

He had to aid him during nearly the whole of his career there, as assistant stage manager and prompter, Mr. Williams, who had been much with him during the latter part of his time

* Ever since those days plays have been produced which have run hundreds of nights; and when that is the case how is it possible for the members of the profession to improve in their art, being confined to the same character so many nights in succession? At his theatre sometimes as many as three plays were acted in a week as first pieces, and the same may be said of after-pieces, as the copies of the first night bills of pretty nearly everything he produced are in the possession of his nephew.

in the provinces. He was an indefatigable assistant, and a really good actor of what are termed second-rate Old Men. He was specially with him at Exeter and Plymouth.

He had also from time to time three good scene-painters, Frederick Fenton the principal, who painted a greater number of "flats" than perhaps any other man had a chance of doing. He was greatest, perhaps, at fine, bold, rugged scenery, mountainous and rocky, such as the outside of Macbeth's castle, the walls of Athens, and things similar, as well as grand architectural scenery. Finlay, who was with him a great part of the time, was best at woods and sylvan glades; and last, young James, who had studied under Beverley. He took a position somewhat between the other two. Then as assistant to all three was Charles Fenton, a useful artist, and a very clever actor as well, being really great in small character parts. He was, moreover, the Harlequin in the pantomimes during Mr. Phelps's entire management.

A great deal has been said about the scenic splendour, &c., of Charles Kean's revivals; but although he went far beyond Mr. Phelps, as a rule, in the plays which had been produced by Mr. Macready, still he did nothing to surpass Mr. Phelps's Antony and Cleopatra, Timon of Athens, and Pericles, Prince of Tyre. Even his Sardanapalus, which, he said, cost him £3000 to get up, failed to compete in real scenic impressiveness with Timon of Athens, which did not cost Mr. Phelps more than one-fourth of that sum. Unlimited disbursement does not necessarily insure art excellence. With regard to the effects produced by the supers* (whom he drilled until he got them to do all he wanted, and he never had more than seventy even in his Roman mobs), he so grouped them that they produced as great an effect as double that number did on Drury Lane stage.

The effect, again, produced by grouping in what is usually termed the dagger scene, in Macbeth, after the murder is committed, and the whole of the inmates of the castle are aroused

* To seem to be discontented and real grumblers was the effort of every man of them, and they succeeded well; and I remember the effect was especially grand in Coriolanus, when he looked down upon them from the steps he had mounted, and they raised their staves on expelling him from the city.—W. M. P.

by Macduff, was surpassingly fine. The first night the entire audience rose at it. .

He kept the entire Press at arm's-length during the whole of his management. Whatever was written of him was unbiassed by friendship, and in no way influenced by him. He never invited one of the critics to his house or met them elsewhere. He rarely read any of their remarks, saying that he had perfect confidence in his own judgment, and never did anything without first having duly considered and well weighed it in his own mind; and that what he did lay between him and the public at large, and not between him and any clique of critics, however pretentious and clever. Were he to attempt to please every individual who differed from him, he suspected he might do nothing else, and in the end please no one. This spirit of independence was one of his most unmistakable attributes, and Tomlin, in his notice of the close of his management—inserted further on—refers to this in anything but a contented tone.

Nearly all the best of our portrait painters and sculptors tried to get him to sit to them from time to time, but up to this period he never would go through the bother except to one young artist, related to the family, who drew a portrait of him on stone, from which one hundred copies only were struck off for private circulation. Of a like nature was the drawing taken somewhat earlier by C. Baugniet, the famous Flemish artist. His portrait had been taken by the daguerreotype process, and he had sat several times to photographers, some of whom succeeded in producing fair likenesses.

In the following passage Mr. May Phelps speaks in his own person:—

“Now as to the cause of his giving up management and closing the theatre so suddenly as he did, and which I am inclined to think never would have happened but for what I am about to relate (and in doing this I must speak somewhat of myself), and he would have ended his career in the old theatre, or a new one on its site, or some other in the immediate neighbourhood (which had been already twice in contemplation at different periods, and then given up because the title to the ground on each occasion was considered defective,—they were both in the main road near the Angel, Islington), and would no doubt

have produced the plays he afterwards did at Drury Lane, under F. B. Chatterton's lesseeship, as well as others which he had often talked of doing of the Elizabethan poets, say *Manfred*, *Faust*, *Volpone*, or the *Fox*, *The Broken Heart*, *Richard II.*, *Troilus and Cressida*, and *Henry VI.* But one fine dry morning in March, when a bitter north-east wind was blowing, his wife and son Edmund came to me at my place of business, at 6, Crosby Square, E.C., much to my astonishment, for she had never been there before, and I could not imagine what could possibly be the cause of her coming then (although unfortunately I have a very vivid recollection at this moment of the effect of it on myself, for it laid me on a sick bed for three weeks, and confined me to the house for three more), until she communicated to me the following :—‘ I’ve left Pa ’ (as she always styled him when speaking to me) ‘ at home in a most excited state, crying and saying that he’s ruined, and will never be fit for anything again. He does not know I’ve come to you, but do come in as you go home and see if you can help him out of his difficulty, whatever it may be ; we can get nothing from him beyond what I’ve told you.’ I went out into the square with her without my overcoat, and stupidly walked with them to the Bank, which gave me the cold above hinted at, and an attack of lumbago, which at that time I was very subject to. I desired her to ask him to meet me in his private room at the theatre at seven o’clock (he was not acting that night). I turned matters over in my mind to try and see if I could possibly hit on anything that could have occurred to him beyond what I was acquainted with. I knew that his acting manager, his old friend Malone Raymond, was really fit for nothing, and that the double duty was trying him very much, and that he had been robbed right and left by his box book-keeper, whom he had foolishly trusted with between £150 and £200 in his hands at one time ; and that although he was getting all the profit that was made, yet with what he had laid out in decorating the theatre, on taking a new lease, and one thing and another, he had not made more during the last two years than when Mr. Greenwood was with him, and taking a share. On going to the theatre I called on his medical man, who was also my own, and he made a communication to me which partly explained matters.

He had come to the conclusion a short time before that my aunt had unmistakably a cancer forming (already referred to in my opening), but which to that time had only been supposed to be a tumour. I, on his telling me of it, told him I considered he was in duty bound to tell my uncle on the first favourable opportunity, and it appeared he had done so that morning, and so I was partly prepared to meet him, as I felt sure this was the cause of his saying what he had to his wife. When I entered the room he was pacing up and down in a very excited manner, which I at once met by putting on a bolder front than I really felt, and demanded to know whatever was the cause of his excitement. He commenced by telling me what I already knew, and which he said he dared not tell his wife, that his career was all over, he would never be fit for anything again, and such-like expressions. I could well understand the knock-down blow it was to him, seeing how dear they had been to one another. No one had ever dressed him but herself from the opening of Sadler's Wells, either in town or out. Of course she had a man-servant to wait on her, and put on his armour in those characters requiring it. I saw that he was in my hands like a child, for he said, '*What am I to do?*' 'This,' said I *without any hesitation* : 'close the theatre to-morrow week (put up your notice to-morrow), give up management, and let this house for the remainder of your lease. It is high time you had some rest; Macready retired at your age altogether. You say you cannot go on taking the onus on your own shoulders of producing anything fresh; go in for acting only, and a little stage management when you feel inclined. You have a very comprehensive *répertoire* in Comedy; give up the Macbeths and Othellos, and go on with the Sir Peter Teazles and such-like; you'll be able to play *them* as long as you have your health, and gain sufficient by it to live on in your accustomed style.'

"This had the desired effect, and before I left him he was a little composed, and said he would carry out my programme. When I first saw him he threw himself into a chair and sobbed like a child, and shook like an aspen leaf. Now, Richard was somewhat himself again; but it knocked me quite over, for I was of as nervous a temperament as himself, and I felt for his sufferings almost as much as if they had been my own."

The house was fortunately already let for the summer season (for the performance of operettas, &c.) to a Captain Horton Rhys.

In the summer he played at the Standard and in the provinces, notably at Liverpool; and the *Porcupine*, a Liverpool paper, of 23rd August, 1862, contained the following criticism on him:—

“There has been another dramatic Avatar in Liverpool. Play-goers—long starved upon a meagre allowance, consisting of a brief round of mediocre stars, with the interstices filled up by wretched American pretenders—have discovered that there is yet another artist on the English stage well qualified to maintain its ancient glory. The public, long inured by spiritless management to the utmost indifference to theatricals, have again been roused to good old-fashioned enthusiasm. The return of Mr. Phelps in October is awaited with real interest. Every amateur has turned Phelpsite, and the only difference of opinion is as to which is the finer performance—Sir Pertinax Macsycophant or Bertuccio.

“*Either* might take a place beside the greatest triumphs of the stage, and would have lived for ever in our literature had they been represented before criticism died out. We ourselves give the palm to Sir Pertinax, because it is a much better part. The sordid, ambitious old Scotchman of Macklin’s malicious comedy is indeed one of the finest parts in the range of the drama, and to say so is to pay the highest tribute to Mr. Phelps’s performance of it, for there is no distinction between Sir Pertinax and him when he is playing the character. Mr. Phelps makes it his first business to *be* whatever he plays. This is one great secret of his almost invariable success. In *nearly* all his pieces, and *par excellence* in this, it seems quite unnatural to discuss what he makes of a part or how he treats it. There is nothing objective about his acting—it is intensely subjective. All such expressions as ‘handling,’ ‘rendering,’ ‘conception,’ ‘execution,’ and the like, seem out of place. You may dislike Sir Pertinax or Bertuccio, but it never occurs to you that either can be anything different from what you see when Mr. Phelps is playing it.

“It is important, too, to notice—not invidiously, but distinctly—how this distinguishes between him and other actors quite as clever at assumption. No man on the stage, perhaps, has such infinite power of varying his personality as Mr. Wigan, and no man is more exactly every character he plays; but *his* strong point is *minuteness*, while Mr. Phelps’s is *thoroughness*. The critic can *discern*, in that general result of perfect assumption which delights the public in Mr. Wigan, an infinity of detail and finish. The artist has the part always, as it were, in his hand,—is always, as it were, ‘using his *antennae*,’—and making everything of it that exact imitation of details can accomplish under the direction of a sound conception. Now, Mr. Phelps is either less indebted to art or conceals it better. He has certain

actions which accompany him through every part—as, for example, when in passion, the rummaging of his chest, and the swinging, nervous, firm, rapid pacing of the stage, with a slightly oscillatory motion of his head. Any part made up merely of finish—except, indeed, such eccentrics as the senile Justice Shallow—would be quite out of his range. It would be hopeless for him to attempt such a character as Prosper in *The Scrap of Paper*. But for this deficiency in *finish* Mr. Phelps more than compensates by *power* and *intensity*. These indeed seem, for they are actions that a man might play, but he has that within which impels and animates his whole being with a wonderful force of reality, and takes all imaginations captive with its truth and force. He can dispense with much detail, for he has a *genius* for *being* which rises above any *genius* for *acting*, and any character, in itself worth representation, is sure to gain infinitely from Mr. Phelps's personification. He is sure to be it more thoroughly than even the author would have thought possible, and the intense reality of his assumption will strike out a thousand flashes which irradiate the part with a vividness never to be obtained by mere objective finish. Thus even Brutus, Coriolanus, and Bottom the Weaver gain new force and power from the originality of his realizations. Much more does Sir Pertinax Macsycophant, which, after carefully reviewing the criticisms on Macklin, Cooke, and Vandenhoff, we are strongly disposed to believe has never been so well acted as by Mr. Macready's *great* lieutenant.

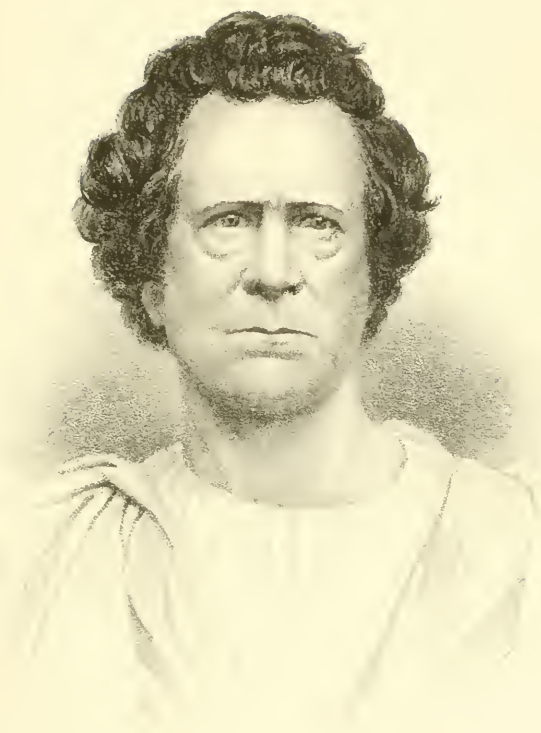
“Acting such as this would ruin, by its very intensity, an untruthful character, but it heightens into absolute reality such a true one as Macklin's ‘true-born Scotchman.’ It is pleasant to notice how exquisitely the great earnestness and sincerity of the actor strengthens the caustic though unconscious humour of the old Scot's lecture to his son on patriotism. It even adds cent. per cent. to the conscious humour of the unctuous description of his matrimonial forays among the Methodists. It raises, quite justifiably, to something very like tragedy the passionate scenes in which the headstrong and avaricious ‘man of the world’ is brought face to face with the frustration of his worldly schemes. Nay, more, it renders curiously enjoyable the scene in which Sir Pertinax proposes to the chaplain to suggest to Egerton the seduction of Constantia, and offers as an inducement the reversion of her charms in lawful wedlock. Delivered in a cold-blooded manner, the proposition would be horribly repulsive, but there sits the father vibrating with passionate dread of the ruin of his son's prospects and his own ambition, and too frenzied on that account even to catch a glimpse of any other consideration. Black-hearted as by implication he must be, it is impossible to check a certain feeling for him. In the very midst of his unscrupulous villainy, his tremendous earnestness takes our human sympathies by storm. When this last hope fails him, he *overwhelms* the virtuous chaplain with denunciations of his principles; and perhaps this passage is one of the most racy, subtle, and double-edged both in writing and acting on the modern stage. It is difficult to say who is to play it when Mr. Phelps has gone, but

surely such a marvellous piece of comedy has in it the essence of immortality.

"Space forbids us to expatiate, but we must do justice to the copiousness and *vis* of Mr. Phelps's dramatic resource ; because it may otherwise be supposed that he altogether substitutes rough vigour for careful finish. On the contrary, Mr. Phelps is a most effective master of the art of working up. To see this, it is only necessary to read over any part in which he has lately appeared. The hits he makes by pauses, pacings, glances, chuckles, and changes of tone are triumphs of stage play, and there are many touches as subtle as they are striking. For example, Mr. Phelps never says ' My lord ' in reference to his dependant, Lord Lumbercourt, in his absence, without ironically indicating the relations which subsist between them. To conclude, Mr. Phelps's Scotch is almost perfection, but not quite. We doubt, for instance, whether the ' to ' of the infinitive is pronounced by Scotchmen with the same provincialism (*tull*) as ' to ' the preposition.

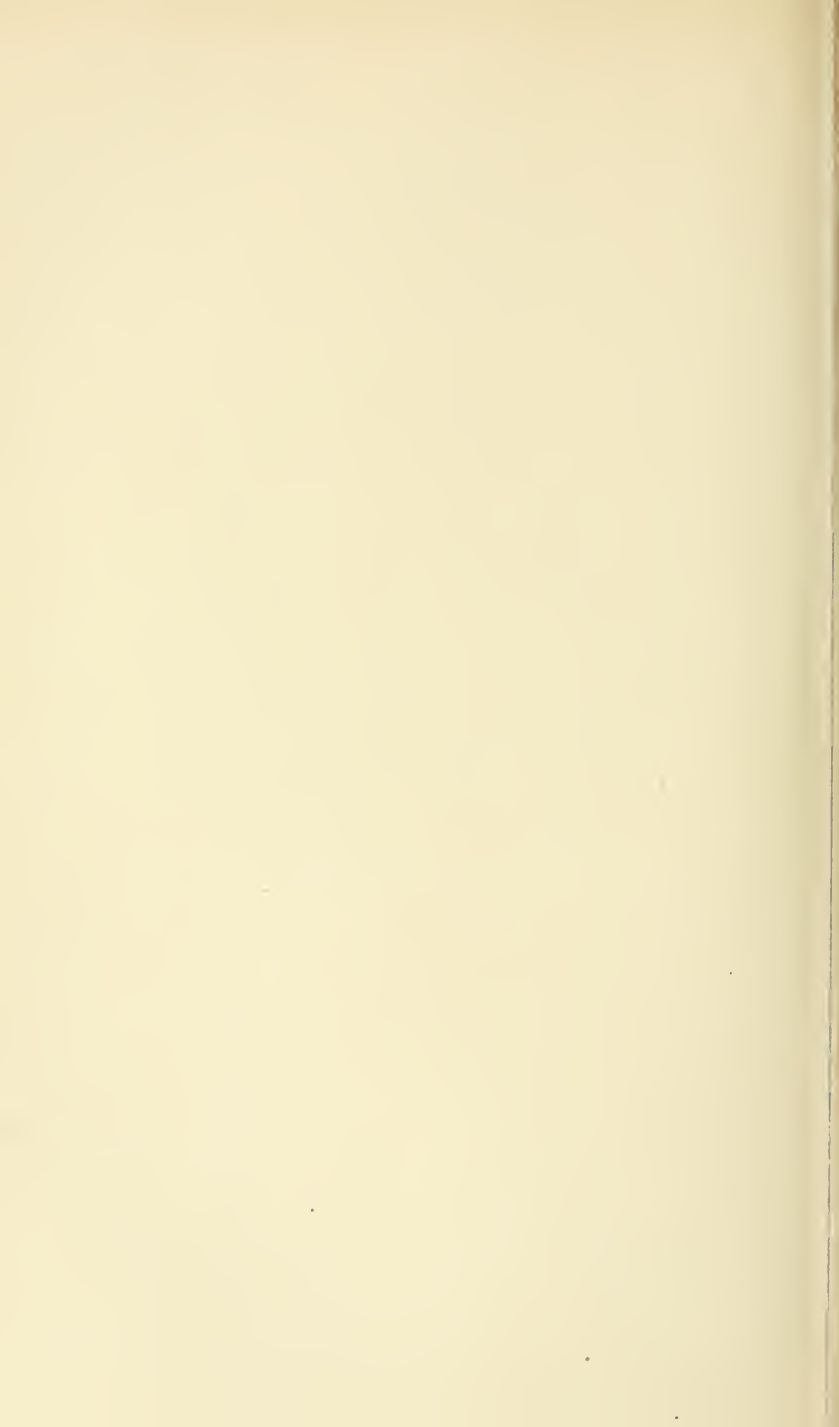
"The part of Bertuccio in *The Fool's Revenge* is but little inferior to Sir Pertinax as a performance ; but the piece is heavy. The last act of the play, like the marvellous fourth act of *The Man of the World*, proves that, in depicting the effect of strong passion on the frame,—which is one *great* part of the tragedian's art, though neither Barry Sullivan, James Anderson, nor G. V. Brooke attempt it much,—Mr. Phelps has no rival."

Having succeeded in letting the theatre for the remainder of his term to the gentleman already mentioned, Phelps agreed to play a farewell engagement there of six or eight weeks, playing one of his principal characters for the entire week to give the new management a start ; and a good thing it was for them, for the theatre was crowded every night. He took his farewell benefit on 6th November, exactly sixteen years prior to his death, and addressed the audience. There was no particular stir made by him on the occasion, no announcement by paragraphs in the newspapers, but a simple statement on the bill of the day that it was his last appearance at that theatre, and that he would address a few words to his friends. The play was *Julius Cæsar*. He acted Brutus ; Creswick, Cassius ; and his son Edmund, Marc Antony. We insert notices of this performance from the *Morning Herald and Standard* and the *Morning Advertiser*, as well as an account of his giving up management from the *Times*.



MR. PHELPS AS BRUTUS

From an original in the possession of his Daughter



SADLER'S WELLS.

"Mr. Phelps concluded his series of farewell performances on Friday evening, with Brutus in Julius Cæsar—a character which admirably befits his solemn and earnest style and his profound sentiments. Perhaps his enthusiastic and expectant audience would have preferred a more stirring and melodramatic part—such as Macbeth, Othello, or Richard III. (for these, though Shakespeare's, *are* melodramatic)—to lend their well-inclined tongues still further opportunity for boisterous acclamation. Brutus, indeed, is one of the most difficult and 'up-hill' characters in the Shakespearean drama to render what is called 'telling' on the stage, and is altogether the most classical delineation of the poet, and that which is freest from the leaven of the melodramatic element. The irritability and veering passions of Cassius, and the smothered fire of Antony, breaking out at last into a volcano, necessarily take away much of the applause from the calmness and nobility of Brutus, which, indeed, so few are competent to realize with any effect. For this reason many actors, Macready among them, for the most part preferred impersonating Cassius, as being most effective in the performance, and most likely to elicit general approbation. Mr. Phelps, nevertheless, we think, was right in selecting Brutus in preference to Cassius for his final farewell performance, as being better suited to his stately and impressive manner and the suavity and grandeur of his declamation. Other characters might have awakened louder and more frequent bursts of applause; none could have commanded profounder veneration for the scholarly attainments of the actor, nor more thorough conviction of his eminent tragic powers. In two scenes Mr. Phelps was especially fine—in the quarrel between Brutus and Cassius, and in the scene with the boy Lucius, when he falls asleep while playing and singing. Both were inimitable in very different ways. The latter could not be surpassed for its gentleness and tenderness. The scene with Cæsar's Ghost, too, which follows, was most admirable. Mr. Phelps was recalled at the fall of the curtain, and was received with uproarious acclamations.

"Mr. Phelps's secession from the Sadler's Wells Theatre will work a great change in the tastes of the inhabitants of the neighbourhood. For years nothing was presented to the lovers of acting but the legitimate drama. The hot-bed and prurient concoctions of the French stage, and the insipid productions of the modern English, were alike eschewed. The little temple at Islington maintained a high and unsullied name when all other theatres in the metropolis were falling into a barren reputation, and looked for nothing beyond momentary success. Mr. Phelps unfurled the banner of Shakespeare at a time when Shakespeare was going out of fashion, either through lack of actors or through lack of taste. It is to be regretted that the progress of the good work should be suddenly stopped from whatever cause, and that the artist-manager should be compelled to abdicate at the moment

when he earned most the praises of his fellow-artists. Henceforward Mr. Phelps will shine as a performer on the stage alone. In that capacity his friends will still have the opportunity of bestowing their applause."

"On Thursday evening an event took place which is of some considerable note in the dramatic world, and ought not to be passed over in silence, although, not receiving any official notice of the fact, no blame can attach to those who do pass it over.

"The career of Sadler's Wells Theatre, under the management of Mr. Phelps, is a matter of art and literature, and as such is worthy of note in the history of the century. On the breaking up of the monopoly of the two large theatres, and the extension of the liberty of acting the regular drama in the suburbs, Mr. Phelps was the very first to take advantage of the change in the law, and in 1844 made the following announcement:—'Mrs. Warner and Mr. Phelps have embarked in the management and performance of Sadler's Wells Theatre, in the hope of eventually rendering it what a theatre ought to be—a place for justly representing the works of our great dramatic poets. This undertaking is commenced at a time when the stages which have been exclusively called "National" are closed, or devoted to very different objects from that of presenting the real drama of England, and when the law has placed all theatres upon an equal footing of security and respectability, leaving no difference except in the object and conduct of the management.'

"We have no occasion to go over the history of the theatre, for we have always faithfully chronicled its admirable productions, and must have assisted greatly in giving that publicity to it which is so essential to such an undertaking; and if actors ever carried their consideration beyond their own stages, such services from the Press would be more frequently acknowledged. The very liberty to act was gained by the joint efforts of the Liberal Press, and the actors would never have obtained this liberty without such aid.

"The drawing to a close of a career so honourable, useful, and entertaining as that of Mr. Phelps, as a manager, must not be allowed to pass unnoticed; and, consequently, we visited the theatre, but were unable to get in, for, though one of the worst nights we ever remember to have been out in, the theatre was crowded to the utmost, many persons being contented to stand in the lobbies. The play selected was Julius Cæsar, Mr. Phelps enacting Brutus; his son, Marc Antony; and Mr. Creswick, Cassius. Mr. Phelps's performance of the philosophic hero is well known to Shakespearean admirers, and need not be descanted upon. It admirably suits his sententious and pregnant style.

"The interest was centred in his farewell speech, which he delivered at the end of the play, and a note of which we have been favoured with. It ran as follows:—

"'Ladies and Gentlemen,—It is just possible there may be amongst you some few who will remember what this theatre was nineteen years

ago, but the majority of those assembled here to-night may require to be told that it was devoted to the exhibition of a very low class of drama. When Mr. Macready ceased being manager of Drury Lane Theatre, in 1843, many ladies and gentlemen who had been members of his company were left without a stage on which their talents could be employed. Amongst the number were myself and a lady, now no more, Mrs. Warner. Having been given to understand that the then managers of this theatre were about to abandon it, an arrangement was made, and myself and Mrs. Warner assumed its directorship. About the same time, or rather before, an alteration was made in the law relating to theatres. Most of you, doubtless, are aware that formerly, by virtue of their patents, Drury Lane, Covent Garden, and the Haymarket were the only theatres allowed to act Shakespeare and the high-class drama, usually termed legitimate. The restrictions preventing other theatres from so doing were now removed, and after some consideration, myself and Mrs. Warner issued an address to the public. Our attempt to conduct a theatre of a class such as this theatre then was, upon such principles, was considered generally to be Quixotic in the extreme, and a fortnight was about the time allowed us by those of the Press and others who deemed themselves judges in such matters. In a short time Mrs. Warner withdrew, and I was left alone in the management. I at once determined to make it the object of my life and the end of my management to represent the whole of Shakespeare's plays. I have succeeded in placing upon the stage thirty-four of them, and they have been acted between three and four thousand nights. I added to the name of Shakespeare those of Massinger, Beaumont and Fletcher, Forde, Otway, Webster, amongst the elder dramatists; and amongst more modern names those of Colman the elder, David Garrick, Colman the younger, Sheridan, and, later still, Lord Byron, Sergeant Talfourd, Sir Bulwer Lytton, Sheridan Knowles, &c. The most successful and most meritorious of the new plays I have produced were those written by the late Rev. James White, amongst which Feudal Times and John Saville will bear comparison with any plays of modern date. I think you will allow that, by the continued exhibition of the plays of such men for a period of nearly twenty years, I have fulfilled the promise made in my first address, namely, by the exalted nature of the entertainments to raise the good taste of the audience. And, while upon the subject of new plays, let me mention an extraordinary fact. I have received, during the period of my management, hundreds, I believe I may say thousands,—for I verily believe they would amount to two thousand manuscript plays—from all classes of society; all, with a few exceptions, either not adapted for my theatre, or altogether useless for stage purposes. Although I have given out of the limited means afforded by a small theatre, demanding but moderate prices for admission, as much as £400 for a new play, I have been able to procure but few; yet in no one instance have I refused to purchase any drama, whatever its price or cost of production, which my judgment told me

would succeed in acting. Though new plays have been so difficult to procure, I have never but once had recourse to the French. Last season, at the request of many friends and patrons, I acted Louis XI. ; so that, in this matter also, I have redeemed the promise made in my first appeal to the public to confine the entertainments of this theatre to plays selected from the first stock dramas in the world—reinforced by such new ones as were procurable. The production of thirty-four plays of Shakespeare, some of which have been considered unactable, is a feat, I believe, never before attempted by any manager—at least in modern times. It has been to me a labour of love—an object of pride rather than a source of profit ; for when I tell you that the single play of Pericles cost in its production £1000, and the expense lavished upon the others being very great, you will easily perceive how impossible it was, in such a theatre as this, that my labour should be rewarded by large pecuniary profits. My reasons for resigning the post I have so long held may be told in a few words. Until within the last two years I was greatly assisted by my late partner, Mr. Greenwood, who transacted all the commercial business of the establishment; he thinking proper to retire, the whole devolved upon myself. I found the work more than I could accomplish, having due regard to my health ; and an opportunity occurring, I have transferred my interest in the theatre to another management, at the head of which is an accomplished lady. I feel confident it is a management that, with a little experience, will expand into something extremely good and pleasant, and that it will keep unsoiled the hard-earned reputation of Sadler's Wells. Before I conclude, allow me to observe how much I have been gratified in having been the means of bringing to this house a large body of young men—men, most of whom have received their first theatrical impressions in witnessing the plays of Shakespeare. The amusements of the people are a very important item in the composition of our social system. Dramatic representations have, and I believe in some form or other always will stand in the foremost rank of those amusements ; and it is surely better that the young, who are so easily and strongly impressed by them, should receive those impressions from the plays of Shakespeare rather than from sensation dramas, or translations from the French of questionable morality. And now, ladies and gentlemen, having long endeavoured to deserve your respect, I feel that I leave you accompanied by good wishes to some future scene of action, and respectfully bid you farewell.’

“We need hardly say that the demonstration of feeling was universal, and apparently most sincere ; and thus closed a career worthy of the largest theatre in London, and which would have been carried on at the finest of our structures, had the taste of the age been of a more elevated and refined kind.”

“Mr. Phelps’s engagement at Sadler’s Wells Theatre has now come to an end, and the house, still under the management of Miss Lucette, will, it seems, be devoted for some time to the performance of opera,

the first in the series of lyrical works being *Il Trovatore*, supported by a company comprising the names of H. Haigh, E. Rosenthal, Oliver Summers, Madame Tonnelier, and others.

“Although Mr. Phelps retired from the management of Sadler’s Wells Theatre early in the present year, it was not until last week, when he finally took leave of a public many members of which have grown up from childhood to manhood during the period of his career, that his connection with the establishment seemed really to have terminated. With honest pride he was able to remind his audience of the very great deal he has done in extending a knowledge of the Shakespearean drama in the course of nineteen years; and his statement that he had produced no less than thirty-four of the plays of our great national poet, will surprise all who recollect how small a proportion of Shakespeare’s works ordinarily finds a passage from the library to the stage. But it was one of the most interesting features of Mr. Phelps’s management, that he generally contrived once or twice in the year to place upon his boards some play which had long been assigned to the closet only, and thus he was not only the missionary of dramatic ‘legitimacy’ to the inhabitants of Pentonville and its neighbourhood, but he offered to the literary world in general an opportunity of witnessing a theatrical representation of works of literary celebrity, which, if not seen at Sadler’s Wells, could not be seen at all. The doubtful play *Pericles*, *Timon of Athens*, *Antony and Cleopatra* (with Miss Glyn’s beautiful impersonation of the Egyptian queen), and many other remarkable ‘revivals,’ served to show how willingly Mr. Phelps deviated from the beaten track in order to diffuse a knowledge of the great poet, to the illustration of whom he had devoted his talents and his energies. Let it be added that all the pieces he revived were admirably executed.

“His company, though not, for the most part, composed of actors celebrated at the West End of the town, were drilled with consummate tact into a high degree of efficiency,—individuals were skilfully made subservient to the general effect,—and during the joint reign of Mr. Phelps and Mr. Greenwood (who directed the commercial part of the business) no one ever quitted Sadler’s Wells after the conclusion of a performance, without the conviction that he had devoted his evening to a highly intellectual entertainment, most conscientiously prepared. In his histrionic capacity, Mr. Phelps has left deeply impressed upon the minds of the public many theatrical types of his own creation that will not be easily obliterated. Bottom, in *The Midsummer Night’s Dream* (so different from all previous conceptions of the character), Justice Shallow, in the *Second Part of Henry IV.*, Don Adriano de Armado in *Love’s Labour’s Lost*, and, above all, Sir Pertinax, in Macklin’s comedy, which he alone maintains upon the stage, are specimens of original thought, carefully realized, that in their way could scarcely be surpassed. Attention to decoration was also prominent among Mr. Phelps’s qualifications, and though a stern upholder of legitimacy, he never fell into the erroneous belief that Shakespeare is best honoured by shabby scenery and dresses. *Pericles*, *Timon*,

Antony and Cleopatra, with many other pieces, were attractive as spectacles, and every play was well put on the stage.

"In the history of the English drama Mr. Phelps's management is highly important, from the circumstance that it may be regarded as the first significant result of that alteration of the law by which the managers of the patent houses were deprived of their exclusive right to represent the legitimate drama. Whether the virtual abolition of the patents was followed by a few trifling displays of legitimacy in fresh places, prior to the commencement of Mr. Phelps's enterprises, we are not prepared to affirm or deny, but certainly the opening of Sadler's Wells by him and Mrs. Warner in the year 1844 was the first instance of the regular employment of a minor theatre for the performance of the poetical drama. We may add, by way of conclusion, that Mr. Phelps, who was the first to take advantage of theatrical free trade, never used his advantage for any but the highest purposes, and that he took with him to Sadler's Wells the principles which Mr. Macready had adopted at Covent Garden and Drury Lane. The managerial predecessors of Mr. Macready had often acted like dogs in the manger, neither playing the legitimate drama themselves nor allowing it to be played by any one else; but Mr. Phelps, with the liberty of doing whatever he pleased, rigidly confined himself during a period of nineteen years to the maintenance of the highest form of the drama. His labours were carried on in a comparatively obscure part of the town, but his conscientious zeal must entitle him to universal respect."

After giving up possession to Captain Rhys, who purchased all the scenery, &c., &c., Mr. Phelps never even entered the Theatre Royal, Sadler's Wells, again, much less acted there, as has been stated he did in one or two publications.

Herbert Steele, in 1852, wrote in the *Dublin Commercial Journal and Family Herald*, after giving a long dissertation on the play of Hamlet, as follows:—

"With all these faults, Hamlet is a character around which gathers an intense interest and a singular love. From the first hour at which we see him darkened in the 'nighted colour,' to the latest, when, kindly to the last, he prevents Horatio's suicide, we see the nobility, the beauty of his soul shining through, and all the more remarkable even through those flaws, which, like the rents in the family hut of Sixtus V., but show the light the more gloriously. Our love and interest in Hamlet is undying. I have been prompted to much of this careful (though condensed) consideration of Hamlet's character by the playing of Phelps. He presents Hamlet, in its artistic *ensemble*, better than any actor I ever saw. Charles Kean is simply absurd in the part—violates every rule of decency, and is intensely ridiculous. Macready

was great in it; but particular passages stood out too much: you thought too frequently of Shakespeare's beautiful language, and too rarely of the character he had conceived. Phelps emphatically avoids this. The whole performance—erroneous as I think it in some parts, wanting nature in some others—is still a completed, harmonized piece of acting, showing original conception and great artistic skill and self-denial. Many 'points,' where other actors win loud applause, were judiciously smoothed over by Phelps, and you felt the improvement because it fixed your mind on the whole play. His 'readings' throughout were generally good. Macready had a great passage in 'Is it the *King?*' and *properly* made it a prominent point. Phelps read it wrong—speaking it tauntingly, and not eagerly. After the 'play' Phelps was magnificent, really thrilling; he sent the infection of excitement through the house.

"This engagement of Phelps at the Queen's is a brave and commendable move on the part of Josephs. He could make brighter the 'golden opinions' he has won by it by bringing out a play by an Irishman, and thus adding native genius to imported elocution; and Phelps could help him to a drama just *apropos* at present. Do you remember the letters I wrote from London a few years ago? I spoke of *The Florentines*, a play produced by Phelps, and which 'ran' for several nights. 'It was an excellent play, well digested in the scenes, set down with as much modesty as cunning.' It was the fortune and fate of Fair Rosamond, given in a happy Italian costume. Unlike Hamlet's favourite piece, it 'pleased the million' also, and gave the Sadler's Wells house a help in good time. Mrs. Warner played the heroine, and Phelps himself the chief male part. I did not know then who wrote it, but I have since learned. The author is an Irishman; more than that, he is now the first favourite of all our local *littérateurs*, best loved of our Irish story-tellers; and he is known to us and to hundreds of the authors, artists, and amateurs here, as one who has merited as well as commanded success. You know whom I mean—E. L. A. Berwick. The founder of the *Goldsmith Club* could get an audience, if it were but for love of him alone; but when, in addition, we would have a first-rate artist on the boards, an elegant little theatre, the cause of native talent, and the love of a pure, well-formed, really poetic play—I think I might tell Josephs (and I will if I see him) that he could not do a happier thing than bring it out. If he does, you must come up to see it; I'll give you some dinners, at least, and 'make you free' of the 'painted places of city life.'"

On Phelps's Richelieu, Werner, and Sir Giles Overreach, the same critic wrote a week later:—

"But let me enjoy the 'joys I have,' if I cannot 'fly to others' as yet but fancied. I have since seen Phelps in three characters: Richelieu, Werner, and Sir Giles Overreach. Richelieu is one of the most delicate and difficult characters on the stage. It admits of many

interpretations. The old priest-noble is a hero ; a true hero in his lion heart, intellectual ability, and constant effort ; but his manner has not that stamp of simple courage which we have long linked with our ideas of heroism. His path to power is tortuous, too ; while his mien is manœuvring and marked by something almost mean ; hence the necessity for the actor shaping his *thoughts*, not merely his voice, gesture, and bearing, to suit the subtle complex complexion of Richelieu's soul. Macready brought out boldly much of the attractive heroism of the Cardinal ; even in the most ludicrous tricks done there was a dignity—the dignity of strong purpose and steady aim—elevating the funniest 'dodge' above the level of farce. Calcraft, our late manager here, was still more 'heroic' than Macready ; though, inconsistently, the comedy parts sank too low into burlesque. Phelps presents us chiefly 'the fox,' the cunning old Cardinal ; one does not reverence him much, but you intensely admire his amazing ability. With Phelps the 'hero' is weakened ; the man of *mind*, of intellectual subtlety, comes out characteristically and consistently. Macready's and Phelps's *conceptions* may both be right ; but the carrying out of both present marked differences. Macready delivered some *passages* with grand *effect* ; you *marked* the effect, yet I could not say they were erroneously executed. Taken separately the passages were properly spoken ; but I do believe that if any *one* passage, or any number of separate passages leave too great and emphatic impression on you, an impression in any way disturbing the idea of the whole drama, the artist has so far failed. The presentation of a character, the full conveyance of what the author meant by the play, is of more importance than the admirable and beautiful delivery of any passage. (Any one who remembers *The Merchant of Venice* will feel this ; the 'quality of mercy' speech is the most unreal on the stage, for nearly all the actresses emphasize it too much—even Helen Faucit—often laying the stress on the word *mercy*, which would be proper if the passage were isolated, but is false when the passage is read with the play.) In Richelieu Phelps avoids this, as I said he did in Hamlet ; his conception omits too much the heroism of Richelieu, but the execution of the conception is excellent and consistent.—Next I saw him in Werner, that powerfully painful play. It is very saddening and annoying to watch a character like Werner—noble, good, sensitive, beautiful exceedingly in soul, wronged, affectionate, and loving ; yet side by side with that young, noble, daring devil, Ulric, we cannot respect or like Werner ; and, strange and sinful though it be, we sympathize thoroughly with Ulric. He is an assassin ; a fierce, almost unloving son ; hard, cold, reckless, and haughty ; but the innate devil of humanity prompts us to like him, and we almost shudder to find ourselves forgiving all his crimes and following every glance of his eye with an admiration that is almost love. It is absolute agony to sit by and see Werner—the noble, the heroic, the loving—so prostrated, so pitifully crushed by the side of Ulric ; crushed in soul and spirit—bending before the puissance of a merciless man, who, at all risks, strongly hews out his own paths. In

this character Phelps was *perfect*. His performance of it is as noble a work of art as ever came from the mind of man. Not a word, not a thought, not an idea, is lost. Werner stands before you—

‘a statued mind and naked heart;’

the very inmost throbbings of the man’s soul are tremblingly revealed; it is no acting, it is perfect transformation. Phelps could not have acted it so unless his whole being were imbued with the existence of Werner; he must have studied it long and felt it well before he could present it with such complete power and intense reality as he did on Tuesday night.—Wednesday night I saw him in Sir Giles Overreach—that Richard III. of common life. The character is a possible deformity; the monster is very exceptional, let us trust, but—it is probable. We *feel* that a man might be a Sir Giles Overreach. Vulgar in his ambition, his means towards that end approach grandeur by their subtlety and absolute beauty of adaptation. Ruthless as is his malevolence, it is not petty; fearful as his hypocrisy, it is not mean. He has but one good quality—courage; he *does* win applause by his matchless personal bravery. You think the human devil half redeemed as you feel how reckless he is of life when revenge is his object; his blood-thirstiness becomes almost heroic in its intensity. It is a great character—a great conception—worthy of Shakespeare—true to life in every word. How the low-born soul of the man appears in the comments on his daughter’s dress; he would have wished it ‘spangled with flowers.’ All through one feels the genius of Massinger—granted a Sir Giles Overreach—he could not speak other than he does. In this, as in the two others, my perfect realization of the characters comes from Phelps; the impression I had from closet study was strong enough, but the words and looks of the actor seemed to *burn them in*, never to be forgotten. His anger towards the end was terrible; one felt keen pity mingled with horror; the quick changes from rage to rejoicing, and then the downfall, when there comes on that awful paralysis of soul, were thrilling; as the eye of the till then unawed wicked man wanders in wild weakness, seeing fearful visions of the hearts he had broken. Then came that final shudder, when the daughter for whom he had done all bends before his distraught gaze, and the memory comes to tear his heart and scorch his soul. I would scarcely wish to see it again; I felt almost as Byron did seeing Kean do it: the sight of wickedness so fearful, yet so painfully human, is not ‘good’ for the thought. It fills one with a strange shudder, and brings ‘thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls.’

“I have thus seen Phelps in three of the most dissimilar characters; and my summary is—He is far and away the greatest artist on the stage; in fact, one might say, the only great actor now left us. One feels really grateful to a man who, with such perfect and beautiful power, can present the subtlest sensations of the soul, and the deepest passions of the heart. May he long live to convey to us the poetry of passion and the heroism of Humanity!”

The following criticisms from the pen of John Oxenford, on *The Patrician's Daughter*, *The Tempest*, *Timon of Athens*, and the Second Part of *King Henry IV.*, appeared in the *Times* at sundry dates:—

SADLER'S WELLS.

"This northern temple of the legitimate drama has made a great acquisition, in the person of a lady from Edinburgh, named Addison, who plays Mabel, in *The Patrician's Daughter*. There is something of formality and of crudity in her manner; but this vanishes as she warms up with the character, and she displays a depth of feeling, and has a store of passion—hearty, vehement, strongly expressed—which are by no means common with the present generation of actors. The last act, in which Mabel dies, affords the grand opportunity, and here her delirious manner, and her bursts of intense feeling, are very remarkable. As a reader she is excellent. We carefully watched her through all the phases of youthful enthusiasm, conventional pride, and heart-rending grief, and all was interpreted with intelligence. In her most passionate displays she never lost herself, but always worked carefully.

"We were glad to make acquaintance once more with a tragedy the beauties of which we were among the first to recognize, while we were by no means insensible to its defects. There are passages in *The Patrician's Daughter* of exquisite truth and pathos,—passages which are worthy the pen of any writer, and which show a sense of human nature remarkable in an age when the dramatic tendency is towards mere abstraction. The great fault is the catastrophe of the fourth act, in which Mordaunt, who is made a kind of democratic ideal, is allowed to drop into a mere ruffian. This is the point we can never forgive, and it stands out in harsh contrast, when the actual injury to Mordaunt is so beautifully described, and the characters of Mabel, Lydia, and the old Earl so skilfully delineated. However, the very charming line, uttered by the dying Mabel,

'He might have pardoned *me*, but he chose vengeance,'

shows that the author became fully sensible of the delinquency of his hero, though he allowed himself to be hurried into a sort of sympathy during the bustle of the fourth act, and to make Mordaunt fancy that he was fighting 'a battle for high principles.' The speeches on this occasion were delivered by Mr. Phelps with great power and effect, but would he not—he, the actor of genuine pathos—have preferred something in which the kindness of human nature was more apparent?

"Nevertheless, with all its drawbacks, *The Patrician's Daughter* is a production of extraordinary merit, written according to a new principle, and with a strong purpose, and abounding in instances of feeling and

of reflection that will render it permanent when many other cotemporary works will have proved ephemeral."

"Instead of searching the dark nooks and corners of the British drama to find a play worthy of being made the grand spectacle of his season, Mr. Phelps this year has recourse to the ever familiar *Tempest*, which was revived last night with signal success. He produced it in excellent style several years ago, but the glories now have nothing to do with the glories then. The scenery is from new designs, the effects are newly contrived,—in short, the whole affair is new throughout.

"Rarely do we see a piece so charmingly put upon the stage. It is not that the scenery is of the most gorgeous and elaborate kind, but the series of *tableaux* is preceded by a sort of poetic feeling that thoroughly corresponds to the moral atmosphere of the drama, and keeps the spectator in a pleasant state of magical illusion. The artist, Mr. Fenton, has clearly marked upon his pictures that unity of place which, in spite of the purely romantic nature of the personages, gives such a classical form to *The Tempest*. All the views are evidently from spots within a few yards of each other. Rocks of the same kind perpetually hem in the same blue waters; but nevertheless every variety that is within the reach of composition is produced, and, the natural objects generally being treated in a manner almost fantastic, the constant difference is as striking as the constant similarity. You may fancy the whole action taking place in the neighbourhood of Freshwater Bay, some new point of view being constantly selected, while the character of the scenery remains unaltered. The first scene, on the deck of the vessel, which is generally omitted, is restored on the occasion of this revival, and a new "effect" is secured by the increased fidelity to Shakespeare. A rocking ship, on the same principle as the one which acquired such fame in *Pericles*, is introduced, and falls to pieces with terrible accuracy, submerging the crew into a *carpet* of rolling waves. The same poetical feeling which seems to have guided the whole production is shown here by the manner in which all the roar and hurry of the storm and the storm-stricken seems to melt away like an unquiet dream, and leave the spectator in tranquil contemplation of the group formed by the aged magician and his docile child.

"Though, like all other works by Shakespeare, *The Tempest* is invariably cast with as much strength as the resources of a theatre will afford, it is not a play to which one would generally look for remarkable acting, save in the comic parts. Nevertheless, Mr. Phelps gave such a refined interpretation of Prospero, especially in the later portion of the piece, that he endowed him with unusual interest. A saint-like mildness seemed to counteract the sense of command in the potent magician when he resolves to leave the scene of his magic reign, and live among his fellow-mortals. Miranda was played with a great deal of elegance and delicacy by the new actress, Miss Eburne, but she

must have a character of more weight before she confirms the powerful impression she made by her Julia. Unless her *début* was most misleading, she has another mission than that of portraying mere amiable young ladies. Caliban was acted not only well, but with every sign of a profound conception, by Mr. Barrett—a comedian whose merits are beginning to be appreciated. The monster of the isle is often made a mere roaring savage, but Mr. Barrett gave a sub-human aspect to his gestures that completely corresponded to his abject and brutish nature. Miss F. Hughes, though unequal in her singing, prettily represented the delicate Ariel. Ferdinand, the prince of walking gentlemen,—for certainly there is more in his walk than in his talk,—was gracefully represented by Mr. Robinson; and the task of awakening the laughter of the audience was intrusted to Messrs. Ball and Rae, who enacted Trinculo and Stephano with abundance of practical drollery.

“A crowded audience welcomed with acclamations of delight this best combination of Shakespeare and scenery.”

“In 1851 the play-going world became indebted to Mr. Phelps for bringing *Timon of Athens* back to the stage after an absence of something like thirty-five years. However, this bare statement hardly expresses the extent of the obligation, for when it was revived in 1816 as a complete novelty it only ‘ran’ for about seven nights, notwithstanding the excellent acting of Mr. Edmund Kean, some of whose ‘points’ in the character of *Timon* are remembered at the present day. Prior to that year Shakespeare’s play had not been acted at all since the Restoration of Charles II., but at long intervals modified versions, by Shadwell and Cumberland, had successively taken possession of the stage. In these versions the character of the original play was greatly changed by the introduction of new personages and the effort to create a new interest. The piece played in 1816 was, materially, Shakespeare’s, the alterations (made by the Hon. George Lamb) being mere modifications to suit what was deemed the taste of the age.

“The revival of *Timon of Athens* at Sadler’s Wells in 1851 proved very successful; at least, we have every right to draw that inference from its subsequent revival, with increased splendour, on Saturday last. On a piece that had been only moderately fortunate the manager would scarcely have risked such an outlay as must have been necessary to produce a result so brilliant,—nor would so crowded an audience have been assembled together to witness a performance connected with the remembrance of a failure. The expectations of the multitude, based on the reminiscences of the first revival, were evidently great, and, let us add, they were not disappointed. The wanderer on the banks of the New River who on Saturday night heard the shouts resounding from that quaint-looking building which is the home of Pentonville legitimacy, would scarcely have imagined

that they celebrated the triumph of a play long voted unfit for theatrical representation, however delightful to the literary student.

“The fact is, the reported impracticability of *Timon of Athens*, though it may hold good with reference to other theatres, scarcely applies to its representation at Sadler’s Wells. The total absence of female interest, which induced Shadwell to connect *Timon* with a brace of ladies—one true, the other false—and Cumberland to provide him with a dutiful daughter by way of mending the tale, has long been deemed a fatal objection; but those who would make it in reference to Sadler’s Wells have little notion of the popularity of Mr. Phelps. Regarded in his own district not only as an eminent tragedian, but also as a great dramatic reformer, he is literally venerated by his public, and if he can be on the stage from the beginning to the end of the piece so much the better. ‘Female interest’ may be deemed an essential to the drama by the effeminate denizens of the West, but to the stern dramatic Puritan of Pentonville, who believes in nothing but Shakespeare as interpreted by Mr. Phelps, the words will sound light and frivolous. *Timon*, indeed, rules the stage with a most absolute despotism, and his imprecations are of the lengthiest; but, then, Mr. Phelps is *Timon*, and he who did not admire would be a traitor to the cause of ‘young legitimacy.’ However, in case some luckless heretic, unworthy of his neighbourhood, should, after all, be inclined to grow *tant soit peu* weary at the long course of reflective misanthropy, ample means are provided to gratify the love of spectacle. After a series of Greek interiors, tastefully painted and peopled with personages richly and appropriately attired—after a series of classical landscapes, a moving picture representing the march of Alcibiades to Athens is introduced, and the whole concludes with a beautiful seaside view, where the tomb of *Timon* is the conspicuous object, before which the army of the invader is drawn up in reverence. These decorations do infinite credit to the painter, Mr. Fenton, and if some ultra-purists object to the employment of means of attraction not set down by Shakespeare, who does not even bring the tomb of *Timon* upon the stage, they should be reminded that a manager is compelled to appeal to the taste of the general multitude, and that beyond the limits of Pentonville there are numberless sightseers who would flock to see a pageant, though they would listen coldly to the report of a mere Shakespearean revival. As for the earlier decorations, though less imposing in their character, they are marked by that poetical propriety which distinguished Mr. Phelps’s revival of *The Tempest*. Athens, the city of ungrateful parasites, is ever conspicuous to the eye with all its peculiarities of site and architecture, till *Timon* abandons it for ever. Then comes the cave, surrounded with rocks and trees, which, with the haggard figure of the misanthrope in the foreground, forms one of the most effective combinations of desolation, mental and physical, ever presented on the stage.

“*Timon* is one of Mr. Phelps’s most effective characters. As the wealthy prodigal he wears an aspect of high-bred liberality that gains

respect even for reckless extravagance, and the first ebullitions of indignation that vent themselves on the discovery of the general ingratitude by which he is surrounded nicely indicate the sensitive nature, just awakened to an unexpected and painful truth. The curse at the end of the third act is grandly impressive ; the feeling of wrong has kindled itself into a prophetic inspiration ; and the parasites shrink before their awful host as before a supernatural presence. On Saturday this brought down the curtain with a tumult of applause. Throughout the recluse life of the misanthrope, Mr. Phelps especially seizes on the picturesque side of the character. Timon in front of his cave is, as we have already said, first shown as a picturesque object. The impression thus produced is maintained to the end. Moreover, Mr. Phelps never loses sight of the inherent dignity of the misanthrope. The contrast which he draws between himself and the professed low-born snarler Apemantus is replete with an innate sense of aristocracy, and most admirable is the change to sorrow at the words, 'I am sick of this false world.' In the heat of his dispute with Apemantus he has been betrayed into a vulgar expression of rage, and for a few moments it is hard to say which is the more ignoble figure of the two. But the higher nature of Timon rushes back upon him as soon as the intruder is gone, and the transition is most pathetic. Mr. Marston's Apemantus was of the greatest service to the effectiveness of the scene. With a countenance deformed by malignity, an abject deportment, a sharp, spiteful glance, and a hard hitting delivery of the pointed language, this personage was a most admirable type of the worst species of the cynic breed. Mr. Ray was simple and unaffected as the good steward Flavius, making the most of the moral interest naturally excited in his favour without any undue means to obtain applause."

"The revival of those works of Shakespeare which are more familiar to the student than to the mere play-goer, has always been one of the objects of Mr. Phelps's management, and has contributed not a little to maintain the importance of his theatre in the eyes of the literary world. The most secluded reader of the early English drama, if not restrained by Puritanical prejudice, will always be anxious to know how the personages and events which exist for his imagination only actually look when endowed with visible shape, and placed before corporeal eyes. And there is no doubt that an old play of the Shakespearean epoch must be seen before it can be thoroughly appreciated. The 'dramatic poem,' written for the closet, is a modern invention, unknown to the founders of the London stage, who would have thought that a play not to be acted was much the same thing as a picture not to be seen.

"The Second Part of Shakespeare's Henry IV. may be fairly set down as a theatrical rarity, the performance of which must be anticipated with no small amount of curiosity. Sometimes, indeed, the scene representing King Henry's death is acted separately, on one of

those evenings when an entertainment, composed of miscellaneous fragments, takes place for some charitable object ; but the drama, as a whole, is scarcely known to the great body of play-goers. Falstaff swaggering about his exploits on Gad's Hill, or dividing his affections between Mistress Page and Mistress Ford, is a familiar figure to thousands who have never heard of his amours with Doll Tearsheet, and many could repeat by heart his soliloquy on honour to whom the dissertation on the virtues of 'sherris-sack' would be an absolute novelty. Nine years, we believe, have elapsed since the Second Part of Henry IV. was performed at Sadler's Wells, and its performance elsewhere will only be remembered by the older patrons of the drama.

"Whether it will ever acquire the permanent popularity which belongs to the First Part of Henry IV. and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* may reasonably be doubted, from the mere circumstance that such popularity is not acquired already. Experience shows us that our ancestors were not altogether mistaken when they stamped certain plays as destined for a perpetual sojourn on the stage, and set apart others as irremovable tenants of those library shelves that are loaded with the records of the past. The literary enthusiasm with respect to Shakespeare which has been kindled within the last half century, and has received so much aliment from the almost idolatrous critics of Germany, has had its effect in causing the revival of many plays that seemed almost to have forfeited their theatrical existence. Nevertheless, the permanent Shakspearean repertory is not increased, and we do not believe that the large play-going multitude is familiar with a greater number of plays than it was fifty years ago. An important change has indeed taken place in the texts presented to the audience, and the desire is everywhere prevalent to follow Shakespeare as closely as possible, and to make no alterations save those which decency and a respect for brevity may demand. But even this reform is not rigidly carried out. Our present audiences would stare, it is true, to find Edgar the lover of Cordelia, and to witness Lear restored to sanity ; but Fortinbras is even now an alien to the stage, though a German critic (Herr Rohrbach) has very plausibly explained the importance of his functions in the tragedy of Hamlet ; and Cibber's version of Richard III. retains possession of the boards, in spite of all endeavours to remove it on the part of Shakspearean enthusiasts.

"The great success which attended the revival of the Second Part of Henry IV. at Sadler's Wells on Saturday night would seem to militate against the validity of our argument, for which precedent is the sole foundation. The house was crowded, and the audience was delighted ; indeed, the occupants of the gallery were sometimes so obstreperous in the manifestation of their keen enjoyment that, by the more quietly disposed, a little apathy would occasionally have been hailed as a welcome relief. Of course the famous scene in which the enrolment of the recruits takes place, and a number of grotesque tatterdemallions are in turns presented to Falstaff, marked the culminating

point of mirth, but the roars it caused were nearly rivalled by those that accompanied the dangerous act in which Doll Tearsheet is the heroine. Regarding the play in a Bowdler spirit, one would be inclined to counsel the omission of this act altogether, for the lovely Doll is a *traviata* of the most repulsive kind. But the admirable manner in which she is represented by Mrs. Lingard, and the noisy pleasure which she awakens among the audience by rating Ancient Pistol, with arms a-kimbo and head shaking with defiance, are such practical arguments in her favour, that the soft voice of propriety lifted against her would be drowned as in a hurricane. Great praise is likewise due to Mrs. Barrett, whose maudlin timidity as Dame Quickly contrasts excellently with the ferocity of the undaunted Doll.

"It is not often that we have to record a more conscientious and well-sustained personation than that of Falstaff by Mr. Barrett. He does not, indeed, adopt Dr. Maginn's theory that the fat knight, while the cause of laughter in others, should himself be grave, but, regarding the character from a more mirthful point of view, he thoroughly works it out. The long soliloquies deserve the closest attention as specimens of careful reading. Worthy, too, are his attendants, Bardolph, Pistol, and the Page, humorously represented by Messrs. Williams and Seyton and Miss F. Collier.

"However, the great histrionic feature of the production is the personation by Mr. Phelps of the two very different characters, Henry IV. and Justice Shallow. The only scene in which the King appears is in the fourth act, where he is shown as a dying man, but the importance of the scene is increased by the introduction of the beautiful apostrophe to Sleep, which properly belongs to Act III. The dignity of the departing Bolingbroke, his kindly expostulations with his sons, the joy that for a moment lights up his countenance when he hears of the defeat of the rebels, are all in the best taste; and he is ably supported by Mr. Edmund Phelps (Prince Henry), whose carefulness is entitled to all praise. But to behold the complete display of Mr. Phelps's peculiar genius—that of characteristic impersonation—we should rather turn to the other part, that of Justice Shallow, as a masterpiece of comic creation. The loquacity and the effect of age on a not overwise head are exhibited with singular accuracy. The old man laughs at the jest of Falstaff and the song of Silence (well played by Mr. Fenton), but leaves you much in doubt whether he sees the point of the one or the sentiment of the other. His tongue is too glib for his mind, and he repeats his words twice, that he may have time fully to grasp their meaning. Is Falstaff's report of him correct, that all these tales about his youthful excesses are mere fabrications? If so, the good justice is evidently the firmest believer in his own lies, and is utterly unconscious of his own powers of invention. Mr. Phelps also hits on that want of sensibility which belongs to doting old age. The news that the admiral, Old Double, is dead, leads him into a garrulous description of the great qualities of the deceased, but there is no approach to grief. Like Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*,

Justice Shallow may be set down as one of Mr. Phelps's great comic parts.

"The dresses are new and appropriate, and the piece is in every respect excellently mounted."

The *Weekly Dispatch* in 1858 and 1859 had the following by Bayle Bernard on Richelieu and Hamlet:—

SADLER'S WELLS.

"We may be pardoned if we occasionally compare small things with great. Niebulir is our authority, who says, that history in its grandest form is after all but the expanded circle of social transactions. If Mr. Macready was the Alexander of the theatrical world, who enlarged his dominion in every field of the drama, Mr. Phelps claims the praise of being his only lieutenant, who, out of the wreck of a great rule, has built up one of his own. He is our true stage Seleucus! Warde, Elton, Anderson, had even chances with him at starting, and the latter has won for himself a good personal standing. Mr. Phelps is the only one who has had the additional merit of establishing a valuable theatrical system. When our stage records are written by some future Victor or Collier, his achievement will stand out as the most interesting event of the last twenty years. We have no occasion to enlarge on a fact which is so patent and well acknowledged as this, but we may refer briefly to a few of the principles out of which it has grown. Mr. Phelps's object, we must admit, was rather dramatic than theatrical. Basing the acceptance of an author on his human illustration, and not on his scenic, he established at once a poetical aim which had a twofold advantage; whilst it enforced his best efforts, it bred excuse for his weakest. There was policy in its justice. He next, with a feeling just as sound and artistic, resolved to view all the means within his reach as a whole—as material which, if systematized, developed and subjected in proper relation to a central idea, would, however moderate in merit, acquire force from mere harmony, and leave a sense of completeness in all their results which could not fail to content, if it did not always electrify. We cite these two principles—to be detected, we believe, by a very cursory observance of any part of his career—as sufficient proof of his claim to be regarded as a veritable dramatic reformer. Without dwelling on the gratification which such a system must have afforded to the genuine play-goer, there is another view of its merits which we may briefly allude to. It has the additional value of being thoroughly practical. It is a system which any manager with common sense and common industry may put into force. Thus its creation is a positive boon to the Drama; and beyond all the good which has justly accrued to himself, its author may count with very honourable pride on the benefits it is likely to confer on his followers. It must be remembered, however, that to the achievement of his end he had no trifling advantages in

himself as an actor. Simply to have been either a good tragedian or comedian would scarcely have answered in founding his scheme. Variety of performance was essential to success, and this could only be sustained at a remunerative point by talents which could be present on every occasion, and secure in his person the general result. Of Mr. Phelps's variety not a word need be said. Taken in his entire range, and especially in Shakespeare, from the heights of the tragic muse down to the very depths of the comic—from Hamlet to Falstaff, and Macbeth to Bottom, he may fairly claim the praise of being the very best actor the stage now possesses. He is the only true successor of the great school of Garrick, in which genius was understood to be the power of illustrating both sides of the mind, and not throwing itself into one, and there producing effects which, perhaps, owed half their force to the mere fact of distinctness. We are led to these comments by his performance of Richelieu, as well as by the merits of the play's production in general. We have no reluctance in saying that we scarcely rank the Cardinal among his best efforts. Mr. Phelps has this peculiarity—that whilst highly ideal in Shakespeare or the poetical drama, in the mixed or mere romantic he is eminently *real*, as though anxious to balance his imaginative essays by the most objective treatment of lower conceptions. He owes this in part to his humour, which, as a medium of reality, entices him of course into the most direct illustrations, and which acquires no little force from that weight of voice and look which tells with such effect in their graver employment. We see this in Richelieu. The Cardinal has two aspects, that of minister and man, just as Lear has his two aspects of monarch and father. The actor's object of course is to manifest both; but temperament and sympathy attract him to one phase or the other by a sort of elective affinity, very hard to account for, if very easy to feel. It is easy to explain the most popular. The old courtier, grown grey in State-craft and duplicity, who keeps a corner of his heart sacred to domestic affection, who, amidst the searing influences of ambition and flattery, has feelings ever freshened by natural sympathies, is a picture that an audience must always respond to. It is the Cardinal placed in his universal relations. His position as a minister is another affair. To give interest to him here, Bulwer paints him as a patriot, who, in all his intrigues or his violences, strives for his country, and is only forced into evil means by his evil antagonisms. The student of history knows this to be false: that Richelieu had no patriotism except in its ancient Court sense, which identified France with an absolute throne. He had two great designs—to build up the French monarchy by crushing out the last sparks of feudalism in the Huguenot nobles; and, side by side with this, to break down the Popedom in France, by laying the foundations of the Gallican Church. Through both of these projects he proposed but one end—his own elevation over the will of a weak King and a still weaker country. Where was his patriotism when he knew that, in crushing the Huguenots, he was drying up the industrial resources

of France? But his heroism is negatived as he is shown in the play. In order to insure him variety, the historic truth of his subtlety is necessarily given him; and this is felt at once to be at war with all grandeur. The craft with which he tricks his assailants, as well as at last defeats his rival, whilst it shows infinite cleverness, has little of heroism. The fox's skin can neither cover nor piece out the lion's. An English audience feel at once that he is a mass of ambition, and all his talk of France, 'his dear mistress,' is mere empty pretext to veil his true ends. They see it is a struggle of parties for the attainment of power, in which the veteran Whig Cardinal is pretty certain to beat that fine specimen of French Toryism, Mons. de Baradas. Now, it is to the view of Richelieu as a patriot that Mr. Phelps clearly leans. Not that he is wanting in tenderness in his scenes with the lovers; but his force is most apparent in all the personal passages where he has to invest the old statesman with moral pretences; and this is done with a loftiness that strives to show he is so sincere in, and so absorbed by, high purposes, as to be incapable of weighing his very questionable means. Now, conceding that Mr. Phelps has a perfect right to this view, what we object to is his contradictory mode of conveying it. The view itself is ideal, and ought to be borne out by every circumstance in the treatment which would conform to that end—as, for instance, great age and weakness—which, suggesting a greater effort in sustaining his struggles, would make the interest more mental—centering more in his spirit than in the resources it flies to;—we would add, too, more gravity, as suggesting more earnestness, and giving him the benefit of labouring under noble delusions. Mr. Phelps, however, renders him to the last degree real; he makes him strong—almost robust—and very unpleasantly conscious—a man who sees his game clearly, and who enjoys whilst he plays it. His laugh is as hearty as his howl of defiance. Nothing is suggested, but all is brought out—whether in thought or in act—with the utmost force and distinctness. In all this, as we have said, he owes much to his humour, which comes out at all points—strong, sharp, and salient—enforced by his massive style and his sonorous delivery. Still, all things objected, there cannot be a doubt that his Cardinal is a most striking performance, and one well worth observing if on the mere score of effect. It is a picture of broad contrasts and well-balanced colours, in which, if the shadows are massive, the lights are bold and telling. One cannot behold it without feeling a great sense of illusion, or rather, we would say, of historical truth—for we must be just to Mr. Phelps. His is the Richelieu of history. He gives us the man as he was in fact, if not as he is in Bulwer; and on this ground, again, a visit to his benches would not be unprofitable. The student who has conned his De Retz, his Bassompierre, and his Michelet, could scarcely do better than in consulting his Phelps, who puts into action so much of their painting. Whilst the production of this play has all the quiet completeness which we have referred to in principle, its acting throughout was a very appropriate framework to the Cardinal's

portrait. Thoughtful and spirited, clear and intelligent, without flagging or running into the slightest excess, all worked harmoniously in sustaining the illusion and a mental impression. Mr. H. Marston's Baradas was very sound in conception, if at times too demonstrative. Mr. Robinson's De Mauprat was very graceful and chivalrous. Mr. Ray made every tone of his Joseph significant; and Miss Egerton, the Julie, if not quite as self-possessed as her well-trained associates, showed a feeling and purpose which, in the school she has entered, cannot fail to expand."

"The London theatrical season of 1859 commences with a feature that is certainly more distinctive than it is creditable. Out of all its leading theatres, only one of them is specially devoted to Shakespeare and the poetic drama. The two larger houses have long since been perverted from their original use; but all their substitutes, including the Haymarket, have avowedly resorted to a lower class of entertainment. At one house we have the modern comedy, which is, in fact, the drama of real life; at others we have both comedy and tragedy, which belong to no life whatever. Apart from them all the ideal play, which alone can sustain the drama in its enlarging combat with modern tastes, retreats to a London suburb, as to an outer fortress when the citadel is lost, and there entrenching itself as best it can, maintains its ancient warfare with 'barbaric sound and show.' Thus the distinction of Mr. Phelps is, in fact, the disgrace of the metropolis. We honour him as we pity or reprehend his compeers. Nevertheless, his highest merit does not rest on relative grounds. It is easy to see that were we living in the healthiest condition of the drama, his principles of management could not be lessened in their influence. Truth is truth, however varying may be the force with which it is presented. When completeness and not special greatness is proposed as the object of a scheme, the mental satisfaction must repay largely the want of the emotional. We may miss the higher excitement which genius only can bestow, but we gain those true perceptions by which genius must be tested, and wanting which the greatest genius can be but imperfectly enjoyed. We are led to these remarks by a survey of the operations of this theatre since its opening. In little more than a month it has produced three tragedies of Shakespeare,—Romeo and Juliet, Lear, and Hamlet,—and all with a truth of system as well as power of exposition which must have won it consideration in the very best days of the drama. We are more particularly impressed with this fact in reference to the play of Hamlet, which was produced on Saturday, to a house crowded to the roof, and received in a manner which showed its spectators were just as intelligent as they were numerous. The significance of such a fact it would be hard to overrate. Hamlet, the profoundest, and in most respects the abstrusest creation of the poet, a picture of the human soul, which grasps so many of its highest problems as to render it itself the great enigma of ideal literature, nevertheless has an attraction at the theatre

suburban, Sadler's Wells, that crowds the house to overflowing. It is no great discredit to Mr. Phelps to say his Hamlet is not all the dramatic student could desire. A character which is such a microcosm—which is such an equipoise of the two spheres of contemplation and emotion—has probably never been embodied with any approach to its complete demands by more than two or three actors in the entire history of our stage. Betterton, Garrick, and possibly Henderson—men so singularly organized that they reigned with equal supremacy not only over the real and ideal worlds, but the reflective and the passionate—were evidently actors formed by nature to do justice to the double aspect of this marvellous creation. Ordinarily we know that actors possess but half their organization, and, whatever their early efforts, fall in time into the illustration of only one of its distinctions. Of this fact we can recall in our own day two memorable examples, that of Young and Edmund Kean—and more especially can we connect them with the character of Hamlet. Whilst we remember that the one brought before us all the Royal grace and dignity, all the refinement, cultivation, and mentality of Hamlet—it was in the other we beheld the wearing sadness or poignant grief, the filial reverence, the self-contempt, the crushed hope and desolate doom which marked him out so especially as an object for our sympathy. Mr. Phelps's exposition leans as a whole to that of Young. It reveals more to us of the Prince's mind than of the deeper working of his feelings. It presents to us the Royal student, with all his culture and his dignity, and his speculative taste acquired perhaps at the university, which he is at length led to apply under the stings of his misfortunes; but we have less of the Royal sufferer, who endures as much as he dreams, and flies to speculation possibly rather as a refuge than an enjoyment. Thus we must confess that throughout his scenes with the Ghost, the Queen, and with Ophelia, we missed a certain impulse—a certain natural ardour and absorption—which, if we defer at all to the text, seem essential to their right rendering, though even these were not devoid of passages and moments of great energy; whilst, on the contrary, the scenes with the players, with the courtiers, and with the Gravedigger, together with the soliloquies, were irradiated throughout with a naturalness and an intelligence which left nothing to be wished for. On the whole, we regard Mr. Phelps's Hamlet as incomparably the best the stage has possessed for many years; and one that, judging by appearances, is not likely to lose its rank for many years to come. This excellent performance was very worthily supported. The Ghost of Mr. Marston is the very best we have ever seen. It is distinguished, not merely by great solemnity and dignity, but by a pathos and a tenderness, especially in the references to the Queen, which made it singularly real, and which served as a golden link to connect the two existences—of the human and the spiritual. We have an objection, however, to make to the first appearance of the Ghost. Why does he always enter in the foreground, and shock the senses with his substantiality before the mind has had time to rise to the required illusion

of his presence; whereas, if brought on at the back, and dimly discoverable at a distance, the illusion would be invoked at once, and would go on strengthening as the play advanced. The Ophelia of Miss Heath (a young actress who is evidently rising rapidly in her profession) is also to be referred to as a very admirable performance, renewing much of the impression we formerly received from Mrs. Kean's. The Laertes of Mr. Robinson was also highly satisfactory; and something more than satisfactory was the Polonius of Mr. Ray, who restores this maligned old gentleman to his Shakespearean significance. Polonius, according to the poet, is a man of intelligence and feeling, who only in the presence of Hamlet exhibits the pliancy of a courtier, and then, be it remembered, towards a man he thinks demented. His parting charge to his son is a perfect repertory of sound maxims, and his subsequent scene with his daughter not less a proof of a just anxiety. Nevertheless, stage tradition has converted the old chamberlain into a drivelling buffoon, who would be the last man in the world to utter half the things assigned him. Mr. Ray, therefore, in restoring him to reason and propriety, is entitled to the thanks of all admirers of the poet."

On Henry V., *Virginius*, and *The School for Scandal*, the following criticisms appeared at various times in the *Morning Post*:—

SADLER'S WELLS.

"Last night Shakespeare's Henry V. (recently performed at Windsor Castle) was revived at the above theatre with great scenic splendour, and, what is much better, remarkably good acting.

"Mr. Phelps not only gave a scholar-like reading of the principal character, but truly *embodied* it. He substantiated the Shakespearean conception; showing us a living flesh and blood reality, whose every look, word, and gesture were animated by poetry's Promethean fire.

"In King Henry's first scene, the actor at once displayed his power of portraying regal dignity to the life; and, in subsequent portions of the drama, he appeared to equal advantage as the soldier and the courtly gentleman. His delivery of the opening speech beginning 'Sure we thank you, learned lord,' was most impressive. Majestic in accent, and musical in intonation, it left nothing to be desired; but art of a still loftier order was manifested in the utterance of the terrible menaces and biting sarcasm included in the lines commencing 'We are glad the Dauphin is so pleasant with us,' where King Henry replies to the insolent message of Louis.

"Another noble display of histrionic skill was Mr. Phelps's performance of the entire scene in the second act, in which the traitors Gray, Scroop, and Cambridge are exposed, and brought to shame by

their intended victim. Also, throughout the third and fourth acts, where, amid the din of war and environed by dangers, the warrior-king proves himself to be every inch a hero, and an excellent philosopher to boot, the performer was fully equal to his arduous duties. Indeed, he rose with the occasion, for it was in the very difficult speeches—"Once more unto the breach, dear friends!" "So, if a son that is by his father sent about merchandise," "Indeed, the French may lay twenty French crowns to one," and, above all, in the magnificent, soul-stirring address to the overmatched troops, "What's he that wishes so?" that Mr. Phelps achieved his greatest triumphs. High comedy, too, of the best kind, was exhibited by him where the English King endeavours to make his amorous words understood by Katharine, his French bride.

"In short, we class the Henry V. of Mr. Phelps amongst the very best things which the modern European stage has produced."

"Another performance of rare merit was the Pistol of Mr. Hoskins. 'His *solus*!' Egregious dog!" "The *solus* in thy most marvellous face!" "Sword is an oath," "Base is the slave that pays," &c.; and the whole of the celebrated leek-eating scene, were given with graphic force and infinite humour. The 'make-up,' too, was admirable, whilst the braggadocio air, and immense swagger, were assumed throughout without the slightest tinge of exaggeration.

"Miss Travers's personation of the boy was likewise perfect in its way—a thoroughly artistic conception consistently carried out; and great praise may be awarded to 'the Chorus' of Mr. Marston, and the delineations of Bardolph, Fluellen, and Williams, by Messrs. Josephs, Ball, and Barrett.

"The *mise en scène*, as we have already observed, was most magnificent, and nothing could possibly be better than the arrangement of the stage business, which was not only extremely picturesque, but also full of life-like animation and appropriateness of purpose.

"The house was well attended, and an enthusiastic call was made for Mr. Phelps at the conclusion of the drama."

"Sheridan Knowles's play of *Virginus* was last night represented at this theatre with a merit and success which, in these days of poor players and worse plays, it was quite exhilarating to witness. We have already noticed the efforts of Mr. Phelps, this season more strenuous than ever, to resuscitate the drama of England; his undertaking, it must be confessed, is an arduous one, but the manifold courage, in the face of great difficulties, which he has displayed, entitles him to the best thanks of the literary public of the metropolis.

"The play of *Virginus*, although in some parts wanting in striking effects, nevertheless contains in its plot and catastrophe those elements which are most essential to the development of strong feeling and powerful emotion. It is based upon a simple and well-known story, in which right is basely sacrificed to tyranny and oppression; it

appeals at once to the sympathies of the spectator, who, in spite of himself, is carried along by the incidents which in the progress of the play are gradually developed. It will, therefore, always be a popular play, for it appeals at once to the heart, and the dialogue is not filtrated through the head before it reaches the feelings, which, irrespective of other aids, are natural to us all.

"The Virginius of Mr. Phelps is, in our judgment, the best of his performances; it is equal throughout, and the actor having seized upon the attention, retains it to the end. There is a noble nature in the bold and injured Roman father, which is set forth, not with violence, but with determination—a determination allied with and softened by his gentle love for his young daughter. From the anxious inquiry he makes in the first act about the enigma of the letters in the embroidery, to the fatal blow which deprives her of life, his daughter is his be-all and his end-all—'immutable, immaculate, and immortal.' In the betrothment scene Mr. Phelps displayed much dignity and feeling, but his strength lay more in the scene in the forum, and in the tenderness with which, even in his subsequent madness, he hung, as it were, upon the hope of seeing her yet again, and listened to the distant echo of her imagined footstep. And when a moment's reason gives him a glimpse of his dire calamity, he utters one of those bursts of tenderness which are wont to break from a crushed and withered heart, and exclaims

'Though all
The guilty globe should blaze, she will spring up
Through the fire, and soar above the crackling pile
With not a downy feather ruffled by
Its fierceness!'

"We might—and, in good truth, with justice—continue to review this impersonation of the character of Virginius, which we have no hesitation in asserting to be as fine a piece of acting as we have ever seen upon the English stage. The Virginia of Miss Cooper was chaste and natural, and was sustained throughout with much delicacy. The Dentatus of Mr. Barrett, and the Appius Claudius of Mr. Lunt, together with the Icilius of Mr. H. Marston, were well deserving of the applause they received. The Servia of Mrs. Ternan, the faithful nurse of Virginia, was deserving of favourable mention. The house was crowded, and the enthusiasm of the audience was very great throughout."

"Sheridan's comedy of *The School for Scandal* has been played during the latter part of the week at this theatre, and with great success. The character of Sir Peter Teazle is one in which the abilities of Mr. Phelps are very prominently displayed; and the entire conception deservedly places that gentleman in the very first rank of modern comedians. Sir Peter is not, as we have seen him portrayed, either a drivelling sexagenarian, or a grotesque mountebank,

but an old bachelor, sensible in all things save one, namely, his love and marriage with a young, heartless, and silly girl, whose vanity is too great for her discretion, and whose former hoydenish ignorance of life is only equalled by the madness with which she afterwards luxuriates in its most reprehensible follies. The good nature of the old bachelor seems to be his most marked failing; in fact, his besetting weakness. He is first deceived in his wife, and next in his friend: the one is ready to sacrifice her husband's honour; and the other, who 'looks like the innocent flower, but is the serpent under it,' swears a hypocritical devotion to his benefactor while laying siege to the already shaken virtue of his worthless wife. The Lady Teazle of Miss Cooper was sustained with considerable taste; but in the grand scene, when she is discovered concealed behind the screen in Joseph Surface's room, there was a want of that vigour which the circumstances of the case might well call forth. Mr. Lunt's impersonation of the hypocritical Joseph merits general approval; it was quiet, easy, and *natural*, and divested of that absurd stage conventionality in motion and in language which is the curse of the drama, and the very antithesis of good taste and of common sense. Of Mr. H. Marston's Charles Surface we cannot say much that is favourable. It is not the dashing gentleman, the well-bred *roué*, of the author; but a certain sort of something made up of half-drunkard, half-fool, full of unmeaning laughter and violent gesticulation. Charles Surface is mirthful, but not silly; given to wine, but not a drunkard; a gamester, but not vicious; extravagant, but not selfish. Such was Sheridan's man. Mr. Marston's is quite another thing. The play, however, is very creditably put upon the stage; and, if no other inducement were there to attract the public, the Sir Peter Teazle of Mr. Phelps is in itself a piece of finished acting which cannot fail to gratify every one who loves the drama, and is competent to discriminate the natural from the unnatural, and who estimates an actor, not by the noise he makes, but by the truth with which he represents the ordinary characteristics of human life. We must not conclude without giving a well-earned word of praise to Mrs. H. Marston's Mrs. Candour, which was played with much spirit and point."

The three following critiques on *Romeo and Juliet*, Henry V., and Henry IV. (Part Second), appeared respectively at different dates in the *Athenæum*, the *Daily News*, and the *Sunday Times*, the first being by John A. Heraud, and the last by Stirling Coyne:—

"Miss Laura Addison has, at length, been permitted to essay her strength on the Shakespearean bow; and she so far succeeded as to justify us in confidently affirming that she is an actress of no common powers and of considerable judgment. The play was *Romeo and*

Juliet—the heroine being acted by the young lady alluded to, and the hero by Mr. Creswick. Both performers are great acquisitions to the London stage. We were particularly pleased with Mr. Creswick's Romeo, which was throughout chastely conceived and executed without exaggeration. The poetry, however, was better preserved than the passion of the character;—and in the great scene with the Friar in the third act we missed that agonizing emotion to which we have lately been accustomed. The judgment and reason were appealed to rather than the seat of the affections in the throbbing and almost breaking heart; still there was a manly bearing, which, without depriving despair of its vehemence, lent it dignity and support under the pressure of almost intolerable calamity. The love of Juliet, as depicted by Miss Addison, was, in the early scenes, almost girlish in its innocence—in the later, most maidenly in its impetuosity. As the drama increased in its demands on her energies, she gradually rose to passion,—grew into decision of purpose and strengthening form of character. The scenes with the Nurse were enchantingly played; and when she finds that the ‘ancient iniquity’ is no longer to be trusted, her ‘Amen’ and ‘thou hast comforted me marvellous much’ were delivered with that solemn and mysterious emphasis which becomes the situation. Thenceforth, Juliet must act for herself. Miss Addison evidently felt the responsibility of the new position; and assumed an attitude of determination accordingly. At once she attained to maturity. No longer the minor, the maiden,—but the wife and woman,—she must now assume an independence of character, and resort to such measures as may most effectually meet the present extremity. The joyous and confiding girl, previously all truth and straightforwardness, suddenly diplomatizes, submits to duplicity, dares the perils of falsehood and death itself, to preserve the chastity of a plighted and irrevocable love. All this was beautifully delineated. But then comes the dreadful chamber scene, which Juliet ‘must act alone,’—a scene which is the test of an actress's powers,—in which many a Juliet, successful up to that point, has excited ridicule in place of sympathy. This soliloquy is, in fact, one of the most difficult passages in the entire drama. Miss Addison divested it of all its conventionalities; conceived it in a mood and a style perfectly original; contrived to live, as it were, so naturally and unaffectedly in every line,—suffered the horrible imaginings so progressively to accumulate upon her mind,—that all those exaggerations of manner which are usually permitted to change the sublime into the ridiculous were not even suggested. The climax of the action was reached without a leap; and the most powerful effect produced without any sacrifice of discretion and taste. In a word, the scene was an artistic triumph. Mr. Phelps has produced this play with unexampled propriety. With such care and originality has the whole of the *mise en scène* been disposed, that there is scarcely a situation in which there is not some novelty and felicity of arrangement to admire. Nearly all the passages usually omitted from the original text are restored, and

the vindication which they present of the poet's superior judgment is complete. There is not a single instance in which these restorations do not give probability to the motive, and aid the development of the character. The final scene in the monument also strictly obeys the implied stage directions in the text. The body of Paris is conveyed into the vault by Romeo, who never afterwards leaves it. Therein the remainder of the action is also concluded. Juliet is awakened, but never comes forward—dying beside the tomb on which she had been sleeping. The picturesque effect of all this fully justified the poet's conception;—showing how much wiser he was than the players have hitherto been. Mr. Phelps himself performed Mercutio; giving to the Queen Mab speech an entirely new reading—not making a set oration of it, but blending it familiarly with the dialogue. He was deservedly applauded.”

“The intelligent audience of Sadler's Wells, whom its manager has faithfully taught to appreciate the sense and spirit of Shakespeare's poetry, independently of that sumptuous magnificence of scenic display and that elaborate reproduction of antiquarian details which may be found at another establishment, have during last week, since the memorable eve of St. Crispin, been engaged with the heroic and popular figure of our brave King Harry V. In each of the London theatres which yet afford Shakespeare a home—and which both deserve public thanks as they creditably proceed, by very different methods, to the same great national object of bringing forth the various treasures of wonder and delight from his inexhaustible pages—a chapter of English history is at this moment being played. We regard this token of a liking for Shakespeare's historical plays as one of the most encouraging symptoms of a good, sound, honest, and hearty state of mind in the community. The said plays are worth more to us, as a nation, and are more peculiarly our own inheritance, than any other portion of our literature. They grow out of our native soil. One of those ‘good yeomen, whose bones were made in England,’ has chosen to ‘show us here the mettle of his pasture,’ instead of borrowing his argument, as in other works, from Plutarch or from some Italian novelist. Other nations have converted the legendary struggles of their early life into the materials of immortal poetry, but overhung with an awful mythological veil and the mysterious remoteness of the far past. The old soldier of Marathon, indeed, applied his ‘thunder phrase’ to the discomfiture of Asiatic invaders which he himself had actually witnessed. But with this exception and a few amongst the old narrative ballads, the dramatic diorama Shakespeare has painted us of the Plantagenet and Tudor reigns is unparalleled in ancient or modern literature for its combination of a startling realism, and essential truthfulness of recent story with the free bold outlines of imaginative design and the colouring of picturesque romance.

“In this admirable series no play is more adapted to gratify our national feeling than this of the gallant enterprise which passed

through its crisis at Agincourt. There is amongst us an old prejudice not yet eradicated, which King Harry expresses in saying,

‘I thought, upon one pair of English legs
Did march three Frenchmen.’

The inveterate tone of chivalrous defiance, emulation rather than hostility, which prevailed so many ages between us and our next neighbours, breathes out alike in Henry V. and in King John. There is even a touch of ferocity in the former play not quite alien to the vulgar English disposition. But the character of Henry is, perhaps, the most attractive type of manly virtue that Shakespeare has given us. The knightly thirst of adventure and renown, the patient fortitude, the generosity and humane consideration for others, the union of commanding resolution and energy with playful humour and affectionate tenderness—these qualities make him peculiarly interesting. It is unnecessary to say how well the hero's part was sustained by Mr. Phelps, who somehow or other has a patent for performing the character of a great-souled, aspiring, energetic man, and stands unrivalled as the actor of heroes—the most genuine impersonator of nobility of mind. Throughout the serious action of this play, which we might almost venture to call a biography, the interest depends entirely on Henry. There is the discussion by the prelates of his claim, on which occasion we see the conscientious balance of the king's judgment weighing, with a deep sense of statesmanlike responsibility, the terrible mischief of war against the promptings of honour and ambition—there is the Dauphin's insolent mockery, with Henry's dignified and sharp reproof—his stern sentence, just without cruelty, on the traitors at Southampton—the ardent forwardness of his warrior charge at Harfleur—his firm and intrepid repudiation of the terms subsequently offered when, in Picardy, with an enfeebled army, his situation has become one of peril:

‘We would not seek a battle as we are,
Nor, as we are, we say we will not shun it.’

There is his vigil in the camp, with his frank and familiar talk to poor brave fellows by the watchfire, the wisdom and thoughtfulness of what he says to them, the profound and melancholy truth of his soliloquy upon the vanity of that royal sceptre, that ‘proud dream’ on which hangs a burthen of anxieties beyond the strength of man to bear, and then the electric suddenness with which he is roused again into martial activity by the morning summons, and the passionate fervour of almost prophetic ecstasy when he prays the God of battles to steel his soldiers' hearts. All this, and all his manhood, the brief heart-stirring speech to his ‘band of brothers’ on the field, the quick changes of emotion after the battle, between rage at the treacherous cruelty of the foe, sorrow for the death of his peers, promptitude to secure the fruits of victory, and good-natured tolerance of the Welshman's unseasonable gossip—Mr. Phelps gave it to the life. Nor were

the lighter portions of the dialogue less worthily delivered. In the pleasant comedy scene which ends the play, the part of fair Katharine, with her pretty French coquetry and broken English, was very gracefully performed by Miss Egerton, a recent *débutante*, who has shown both talent and good taste, whilst our 'king of good fellows,' with his honest, cheerful importunity, briskly made his way to her consent and the nuptial ratification of the restored peace. Mr. Frederick Robinson was very quaint and good as the Welsh captain, Fluellen; and Mrs. Marston, in the character of Dame Pistol, late Quickly, was broadly humorous and natural.

"A new farce closed Saturday's performances, which merits a word of notice. The Tenant for Life is a very lively and amusing little thing, in which a ridiculous situation is produced by the impudence of a gentleman lodger, who has made up his mind not only to hold possession of his apartments in spite of a notice to quit, but to marry the young widow, who is mistress of the house, whether she will have him or no. Miss Eliza Travers, as a lodging-house Abigail; Mr. Belford, as the intrusive gentleman; and Mr. Fenton, as his manservant, played the best parts with immense success. The fun of it effervesced very well, and produced continual laughter."

"Mr. Phelps has added another to the long list of characters in which he has gained the triumphs of his professional life. He appeared on Saturday se'nnight as Justice Shallow, in the Second Part of King Henry IV. It is now nearly ten years since this play was represented in London; and, with all reverence to its immortal author, it is not, in very many respects, suited to the taste of the present generation. It is but an accommodation of terms to call it an historical drama at all, for the historical incidents are but few, and are treated as pegs on which to hang the humours of the piece. Those humours, though in a certain sense of a savoury and spicy order, and though bristling and sparkling with true Shakespearean touches, are hardly in a modern tone; and, however valuable as picture-glimpses of the manners of a certain class in centuries gone by, out of place in our day. Falstaff, Bardolph, Pistol, Poins, Dame Quickly, and Tearsheet will always keep their own peculiar game alive; and it is a lively game at which they play: but the game *is* peculiar, and it has unquestionably gone out of fashion on the English stage. In the rollicking fun and radiant genialities of The Merry Wives of Windsor the Falstaffian element will never become wearisome; and when its pranks and quips are equally balanced by the imposing activities of court, political, and military life, or by lofty moral illustration, or the subtle development of character, it will be welcomed as a pleasant though very familiar relief to the graver uses of the stage. In the Second Part of King Henry IV., however, it constitutes the dominating element in the drama, which, chiefly on that account, perhaps, is not very likely ever to be a popular entertainment. Nevertheless, there are parts in it which will always form favourite studies for

artists of the highest school; and, of these, Justice Shallow is unquestionably the most interesting and the most important, as contemplated from the histrionic point of view. Justice Shallow is a striking embodiment of some of the leading principles of human nature; a singularly complete personification of a singularly definite type of manhood, and he thus offers abundant scope both to the conceptive and the interpretive powers of the actor. Mr. Phelps has read the character well; he exemplifies it admirably. It is not enough to say that the make-up is in an extraordinary degree life-like, nor that the portraiture is marvellously consistent and unique. There is actual vitality in the impersonation. We have more than a dress and a manner before us: we have a character, in which cupidity and ambition, both ridiculous by reason of the native imbecility of the mind, beat in the heart, leer out from the face, and animate the very feebleness of the old man. The mock merriment, the abject sycophancy, the official fussiness and incapacity, the senile volubility, the utter intellectual weakness which are combined in the part were blended with striking effect in the representation. Indeed, this performance was one of the most triumphantly perfect, in idea and in art, on which we have ever had occasion to compliment Mr. Phelps.

"We need hardly say that King Henry IV. received an equally impressive representation in the fourth act. This part was also undertaken by Mr. Phelps; and though it is one in which he has been frequently seen, he achieved a success as complete as though the performance had been an absolute novelty. The beautiful soliloquy on sleep was perfectly spoken; the expostulation with young Harry received all the subdued intensity of love and solicitude and death, and the recognition of the son's goodness of heart and purpose was so finely accomplished that it is hardly too much to say that the whole house was in tears.

"Mr. Edmund Phelps as Prince Henry was neither so sprightly in action nor so emphatic or easy in speech as we have sometimes found him. The Falstaff of Mr. Barrett was in most respects a meritorious performance. A slight excess of physical agility was its greatest fault. Sir John, according to our notions, was too fat to be always twirling and swinging his walking-stick about—a feature which might more appropriately mark a modern dandy of ordinary dimensions. The other parts were but indifferently filled."

The *Islington Gazette* of 30th January, 1858, in connection with Mr. Phelps's production of *Macbeth* at Her Majesty's Theatre on the occasion of the nuptials of the Princess Royal (which has been already alluded to), contained the following:—

"It is doubtless in the recollection of most of our readers that on Tuesday, the 19th, a series of theatrical performances, intended to celebrate the marriage of the Princess Royal with the Prince of

Prussia, was commenced by Mr. Phelps and the members of the Sadler's Wells company. The Queen was present; and the play selected was *Macbeth*.

"The event itself would call for only a passing notice at our hands. Mr. Phelps has acted before the Queen on previous occasions, and though of course he felt honoured, as all her subjects would, by contributing in any manner to her amusement or gratification, he has achieved too high and too deserved a reputation by his industry and talents to boast much of such patronage.

"The occurrence, however, called forth certain remarks in the *Times* of the following day, so disparaging to Mr. Phelps and so absurdly laudatory of Mr. Kean, that, as Sadler's Wells and its reputation is a sort of local institution, we feel bound to offer a few observations on the subject.

"The *Times* says that a Shakespearean play without Mr. Kean is like a 'Lord Mayor's Show without the Lord Mayor.' The resemblance between the Lord Mayor's Show and a Shakespearean tragedy (by Kean) is complete enough: but who goes to see the Lord Mayor?

"This most unfortunate simile is followed by an assertion which Mr. Kean's friends have repeated so often that he must almost begin to believe it himself. We quote the exact words:—'Mr. Charles Kean has made the Princess's Theatre the acknowledged home of the Shakespearean drama.' If gorgeous scenery and elaborate decorations, with every musical, mechanical, and scientific appliance can make a home for the drama, there is no question that the drama must be thoroughly at home at the Princess's. But these things are no more substitutes for that literal embodiment of an author's meaning which makes a home for the drama, than the stately apartments and painted walls of a palace would be substitutes to an individual for the kindly sympathies and genial intercourse which make *his* home.

"The painter, the tailor, and the upholsterer are Mr. Kean's interpreters of Shakespeare. The best of their kind, no doubt; but these are servants in our school of the drama, not teachers. The palace Richard II. lived in, the clothes he wore, and the throne he sat upon, may all be seen at the Princess's. But how about the King? He is miserably deceived who fancies he has seen anything like him in Oxford Street. In life and in Shakespeare a palace is made for a king to live in, and a throne for a king to sit upon; but at the Princess's the order of things is reversed. There a king only completes the representation of a palace, and adds—*by his robes*—to the grandeur of the throne. An actor at that theatre bears a strong analogy to the wooden dummy which a tailor exhibits in proof of his skill.

"The little importance which Mr. Kean attaches to good acting needs no other proof than the fact of his generally taking the principal character himself. An extremely insignificant figure, a voice without compass, depth, or richness, and a delivery in the highest degree

monotonous and ineffective are his principal characteristics. It is not enough to say he is not an actor; he has not a single attribute of an actor. And this is the man whose theatre, according to the *Times*, 'holds an exclusive rank for the performance of the tragic drama.'

"In the exhibition of theatrical spectacles every one will allow that Mr. Kean is unrivalled; but Sadler's Wells is as much before the Princess's in point of acting as the Princess's is before Sadler's Wells in point of scenery. For the simple reason that scenery is an adjunct of acting, and not, as Mr. Kean's friends suppose, acting an adjunct of scenery, we claim a higher rank for Mr. Phelps's management than Mr. Kean's. We do this on the same principle as we should pronounce Shakespeare in a plain sheepskin a better book than Kotzebue in gilded morocco.

"The luxury and pomp of Roman manners, and the magnificence of the imperial government, were never so conspicuous as when the strength of the empire was decaying, and its safeguards neglected. So, to compare small things with great, Mr. Kean and his imitators are investing with a meretricious splendour the remains of a drama whose vitality they have helped to destroy.

"If ever there be, as we yet hope there may, a general revival of dramatic taste, and a true reverence for the works of our great dramatist, we may safely prophesy that Mr. Kean will come to be regarded as a master showman, and the Princess's as a kindred establishment with Madame Tussaud's.

"Our hopes of such revival now rest almost entirely on Sadler's Wells. We cannot perhaps see there so masterly a personation of every character as our fathers had at the patent theatres, but we can depend on a faithful and able presentation of the author's meaning by the company, and a real appreciation of the author's merits by the audience. 'It is impossible to regard the Pentonville district,' says the *Times*, 'as the focus of the metropolitan drama.' The sapient critic here seems to regard as the 'focus of the drama' the centre of the metropolis! On this ground it would be as difficult to maintain the claims of Sadler's Wells as it would be easy to upset those of the Princess's.

"We had intended to notice the demonstration made by Mr. Kean's friends at his own theatre, on the night of the *Macbeth* performance at Her Majesty's. We have only space now to express our astonishment that amongst all the reasons alleged, and surmises as to the reasons, for the omission of Mr. Kean's name on the occasion, the very simple one that he cannot act *Macbeth*, and could not easily transport to Her Majesty's the stage properties which at the Princess's he shows in lieu of it, does not seem to have occurred to any one."

A Hamburg paper, *Die Freischutz*, of the 7th of May, 1859, had the following:—

STADT THEATRE.

“On Thursday last Phelps, the celebrated English actor, and the company he has brought over to Germany, produced the tragedy of *King Lear*,—almost to empty benches. It is inconceivable how so many rich Englishmen as there are in Hamburg should have neglected an opportunity which tends more than any other to throw a brilliancy on the development of the dramatic art in their mother country. The national feeling which they talk so much about was on this occasion ‘nowhere.’ It was not so when the English dancer visited these boards; English faces were then to be seen in parquet, parterre, and in every part of the house; and the applause awarded to her was certainly patriotic, and the more patriotic because, in an artistic point of view, she did not exceed mediocrity. Phelps, whose talent cannot be unknown to them, and who ranks in the category of Ifland and Ludwig Devrient, should have been the more heartily welcomed by Germans, inasmuch as those who call his language their own had other things to do than to trouble themselves about him. But the number of theatrical connoisseurs present made his triumph the greater. The enthusiastic applause with which he was greeted by a foreign audience must have more than compensated him for the apathy of his countrymen. Phelps is a male Ristori, as true to nature and as careful in study, as genial and free in production, and as obedient to rule as the celebrated Italian. His *Lear* is a living fact; he is an artistic creation in the highest sense of the word. We cannot especially notice any particular scene, for each is a necessary consequence of its predecessor. It is thus that the man must have stood before the bard, a man who, ‘every inch a king,’ had—by his hasty passion, by his rash, hot-blooded, and thoughtless act, by his rejection alike of love and hate, and by his injustice in giving and taking—called down the powers of darkness upon himself. The nervous, kingly old man, with shaking head and trembling hands, stood living before us in the ruin of his power, in his overthrow by his two daughters, in the curse thundering over their ungrateful heads, and in the madness which preceded his death. The expression of his passion followed the course of events step by step, and the climax was rooted in the design of the character. Phelps is a master, and we are sorry that so many of the people in Hamburg who appreciate dramatic art, and who understand the English language, —and even those who do not,—have denied themselves the privilege of seeing him in *Lear*. We are sorry for their own sakes, for Phelps remains Phelps, be the first rank places empty or full.

“DORNBUSCH.”

The following is an abstract of the proceedings at the twelfth anniversary festival of the Royal General Theatrical Fund, held at the Freemasons' Tavern, Great Queen Street, on Monday, April 6th, 1857, when Mr. Phelps took the chair.

PATRONESS :—Her Most Gracious Majesty, the Queen.

VICE-PRESIDENTS :—His Grace the Duke of Devonshire, K.G., the Right Hon. the Earl Fitzhardinge, the Right Hon. the Earl of Longford, the Right Hon. the Lord Tenterden, the Lord Ernest Bruce, the Lord Viscount Raynham, M.P., Baron L. De Rothschild, M.P., Sir Charles Ibbetson, Bart., Sir Edwin Landseer, Hon. F. Henry F. Berkeley, M.P., Sir Bellingham Graham, Bart., Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, Bart., M.P., Thomas Slingsby Duncombe, Esq., M.P., B. Bond Cabbell, Esq., M.P., F.R.S., F.S.A., John Brady, Esq., M.P.; Alderman Wm. Cubitt, M.P., Charles Hill, Esq., Donald Nicoll, Esq., M.P. (*Past Sheriffs of London and Middlesex*); A. Arcedeckne, Esq., William P. Bathe, Esq., Robert Bell, Esq., Jules Benedict, Esq., W. Henry West Betty, Esq., Alpheus C. Billings, Esq., Gustavus Vaughan Brooke, Esq., Hubert de Burgh, Esq., William S. Burton, Esq., Captain Chappell, R.N., T. P. Cooke, Esq., Wm. Cooke, Esq., William Creswick, Esq., Horatio Grosvenor Day, Esq., Charles Dickens, Esq., John Dillon, Esq., John Douglass, Esq., — Elkington, Esq., William Farren, Esq., Walter T. Fawcett, Esq., John Forster, Esq., Thomas L. Greenwood, Esq., Luke James Hansard, Esq., John Hastings, Esq., M.D., Henry Hill, Esq., J. Ireland, Esq., Edwin James, Esq., Q.C., J. W. Janowin, Esq., T. J. Jerwood, Esq., Charles Kean, Esq., Captain James Lamont, R.N., Mark Lemon, Esq., Benjamin Lumley, Esq., W. C. Macready, Esq., Charles Manby, Esq., C.E., R. Monckton Milnes, Esq., M.P., Andrew F. W. Montague, Esq., Nathaniel Montefiore, Esq., Bertie Mostyn, Esq., Wm. Niblo, Esq., of New York, H. M. Parker, Esq., John Penn, Esq., H. W. Phillips, Esq., David Roberts, Esq., R.A., Philip Salomans, Esq., W. Raymond Sams, Esq., Mercer H. Simpson, Esq., Albert Smith, Esq., E. T. Smith, Esq., of the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, Edward Stirling, Esq., Charles Taylor, Esq., Tom Taylor, Esq., William Vansittart, Esq., James W. Wallack, Esq., J. William Wallack, Esq., Z. Watkins, Esq., Benjamin Webster, Esq., Alfred Wigan, Esq., William Willott, Esq., Barney Williams, Esq., Forbes Winslow, Esq., M.D.

HONORARY SOLICITOR :—Thomas J. Jerwood, Esq., Ely Place.

HONORARY TREASURER :—J. B. Buckstone, Esq.

HONORARY PHYSICIAN :—John Hastings, Esq., M.D., Albemarle Street.

SECRETARY :—Mr. Cullenford, Theatre Royal, Haymarket.

"To SAMUEL PHELPS, ESQ.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"In behalf of the Directors and Members of the ROYAL GENERAL THEATRICAL FUND, I feel great pleasure in acknowledging the signal service rendered to us by your excellent Chairmanship at our Annual Festival, on Monday the Sixth of April last, at the Freemasons' Tavern.

"Being aware that you had never before undertaken a like office, and of your reluctance to be placed before the public in such a position, we feel it our duty doubly to thank you for overcoming your scruples to serve us, and to assure you of the gratification your presence and your well-directed efforts in our cause gave to every well-wisher of the Institution.

"And believe me,

"Very truly yours,

"JOHN B. BUCKSTONE,

"Hon. Treasurer."

The twelfth anniversary dinner in celebration of this most excellent institution took place in the grand hall of the Freemasons' Tavern, Great Queen Street, on Monday, April 6th, on which occasion nearly 200 patrons and admirers of the drama were present.

The chair was occupied by SAMUEL PHELPS, ESQ., supported by Sir Charles Ibbetson, Bart.; Charles Dickens, Mark Lemon, J. B. Buckstone, T. P. Cooke, W. Creswick, Under-Sheriff Crosley, Frederic Ledger, Wellington Vallance, E. T. Smith, J. Scott, Alpheus C. Billings, Edward Warwick, Zachariah Watkins, J. U. Janowin, T. J. Jerwood, R. J. Campbell, M.P., W. Williams, John Matthews, Wm. Raymond Sams, Wm. J. Burton, John Hastings, M.D., Dr. G. R. Rowe, Charles Gardiner Guthrie, Martin Pratt, J. L. Toole, Stoequeler, C. Raigh, Esqrs. A considerable number of elegantly attired ladies occupied raised benches, covered with crimson cloth, at the back of the chair. The gallery facing the chair was also filled with a large number of the fair sex, whose presence contributed in no small degree to enliven and give an additional zest to the very highly interesting proceedings of the evening. In the course of the evening, and between the various speeches and toasts, the vocalists exercised their powers in a way that called forth the warmest and heartiest manifestations of approbation and satisfaction on the part of the audience.

After the removal of the cloth,

The CHAIRMAN, who, on rising, was received with much cheering and clapping of hands, which lasted several moments, said: Gentlemen, —The members of the Royal General Theatrical Fund, and who are interested in its present well-being and future prosperity, are to a double charge of duty bound when I call upon them to drink the

health of her Majesty. (Cheers.) First, gentlemen, as loyal and dutiful subjects tendering our love and homage to her who has well deserved them at our hands; and next, to the munificent patroness, to the kind-hearted and benevolent lady who has for the eleventh time increased the funds of this institution by adding thereto the sum of £100 (loud cheers); gentlemen, let the glass raised to our lips be the outward symbol of our inward wishes, that each year of her life may be but a step in advance towards the goal of happiness, and when "old Time shall bring her to her end, goodness and she fill up one monument." (Much cheering.)

The toast was drunk with three times three, amid the most enthusiastic cheering; after which the vocalists sang "God save the Queen," in a style which elicited much applause.

The CHAIRMAN: Gentlemen,—Next in order as in love, Prince Albert, the illustrious consort of our Queen, claims our best remembrance. For the first time for many years the "Prince of Wales" has again become familiar in English mouths. Let us hope that he may live to be blessed at the hearths and revered upon the throne of these realms—link his name with his Royal father's and the rest of the Royal Family, and "e'en let us toast them together." (Cheers.)

The toast was drunk with enthusiasm.

The CHAIRMAN: Gentlemen,—We are met this evening to advance the interests and to promote the welfare, by adding, I hope, to the funds of this association. Its objects are well known to many, perhaps to most, probably not to all of you, although its cause has been pleaded year after year, at this annual festival, "by lips upon whose accents you have loved to dwell"—by men whose eloquence has been of sufficient power to stir the hearts, aye, and open the purses too, of such as I should conceive more difficult to move than the assemblage I see around me—an assemblage composed of men avowedly living under the softening influences of the drama, literature, and the fine arts. (Loud cheers.) Knowing, gentlemen, how much has been said, and well said too, in behalf of this institution, by my predecessors in the office I hold this evening, I feel most painfully my inferiority to those, who have gone before me. ("No, no," and cheers.) I assure you, gentlemen, that nothing but a sense of duty and deference to the opinions of others has induced me to appear before you in a new character, in which I feel myself to be, and one in which I am sure you will find me indeed very imperfect. ("No, no," and cheers.) Gentlemen, if upon my eloquence depend any addition to the funds, or increase of your goodwill towards this association, I am powerless.

"Gentle breath of yours my sails
Must fill, or else my project fails,
Which was to *plead*; but I want
Spirits to enforce, art to enchant,
And my ending is despair
Unless I be relieved by prayer,
Which pierces so that it assaults
Mercy itself, and frees all faults."

Let me, then, ask you good-naturedly to let your imaginations in some degree supply my deficiencies, and think what might be said by one more competent to the task, in behalf of an institution having for its objects to render easy the declining years of those who have spent their lives in ministering, saying the least, to the pleasures, the gratifications, but I would rather say to the intellectual enjoyments of others, through the medium of as delightful, as humanizing—ay, and as noble an art, when rightly directed, as can employ the faculties, mental and physical, of man. (Loud cheers.) Gentlemen, there are few indeed who essay the histrionic profession who are possessed in a high degree of its great requirements; and even when that is the case, it has been considered a drawback upon the actor's powers that "his creations cease to be when he shall cease to live." But, gentlemen, though that be true, does not the vividness of its present impressions in some degree compensate for its want of permanence? (Loud cheers.) What other artist can produce such immediate effects as the actor? What other artist can, as it were, by a single stroke of his wand electrify the heart and brain of assembled thousands—strike a chord that is felt by all at once in a multitude, compelling them involuntarily to acknowledge their common nature, and wonder at the power that thus exposes them to each other in all the fullness of their humanity. (Loud cheering.) Gentlemen, I say again, if such be the actor's power—and there are few who will dare deny it—it is an art worthy of employment by the best mental and physical power of any educated man. (Cheers.) And let not the actor himself complain that he lives not with *posterity*, for no other *artiste* receives the *living* homage that he does, so that his account is fairly balanced. (Cheers.) Gentlemen, we all know, from testimony at least, that Garrick was for thirty years literally an idol. There may be some few here present who probably remember what myriad subjects bowed to the Siddons and John Kemble's majesty (cheers); more whom the flashes of Edmund Kean's genius has impressed with memories never to be effaced (cheers); and last, not least, Macready's power (cheers) is still fresh and green in our remembrance. (Long-continued applause.) But the names I have just mentioned are the great wheels in the histrionic machine, who, in all their vast proportions, stand nobly out to view; but, gentlemen, save for the little wheels that worked below, obscured from sight and scarcely heard, could ne'er have moved at all. (Cheers.) Gentlemen, it is for the little wheels that I would plead to-night. (Cheers.) But if the actor's power be what I have stated, it must be a productive power, and may be wielded either for great good or monstrous evil. (Hear, hear.) Now, gentlemen, I may be permitted, I hope, without intruding myself upon your notice, to say that thirteen years of experience, in a somewhat peculiar position, has taught me to believe, impels me to assert, aye, and I could prove it (if that which is true of a part be true of the whole), that civilization, in exercising her influences upon great masses of the people, can receive no higher aid than that rendered her by dramatic exhibition. (Much applause.) And it is upon this ground, gentlemen, rather than any

other, that I would build the claim for support of an institution like this upon society at large, or at least that portion of it who are not so blinded by bigotry, or addle-headed from any other cause, as to detract from that position which the drama ought justly to attain. (Cheers.) Gentlemen, I will not intrude any further upon your time, but will leave the future well-being of the society in your hands. I propose "Continued prosperity, with its lengthening years, to the Royal General Theatrical Fund," and I associate with the toast the name of Mr. Buckstone. (Loud and long-continued cheering.)

The toast was drunk with the greatest enthusiasm, three times three cheers being given.

MR. BUCKSTONE rose, amidst continued applause, and said,—Gentlemen, as this is our first appearance at the Freemasons' Tavern, and the aspect from the stage here not being quite so familiar as the one we have been accustomed to in the City, I trust I shall be excused if I show the trepidation usual on making a first appearance on strange boards. (Cheers and laughter.) At the same time, I hope we shall find that in removing, according to the Post Office directions, from Bishopsgate Street, E.C., to Great Queen Street, W.C., we shall be O.K., which last initials were said to be used by a certain American President when he indorsed any Government papers that he considered *all correct*. (Laughter.) At all events, gentlemen, whatever may be the result, we have achieved a great advantage by appearing to-night under the management of Mr. Phelps, whose professional experience, acknowledged talent, and great popularity, must insure the curtain falling this evening on a most successful entertainment; while our friends present, and the patrons of the drama, will, I am sure, be glad to hear one fact, that although we have been honoured by titled chairmen and gentlemen of high position presiding over us on these occasions, yet, whenever we have had an actor in the chair, our receipts, to use a technical phrase, have always been greater than at any other time; therefore, gentlemen, what must we hope they will be to-night, when we have such an actor as Mr. Phelps to appeal to your sympathies, and plead the cause of his brothers and sisters of the stage? Gentlemen, I am proud of my profession. (Cheers.) I have great pleasure in announcing to you, as you have already heard from Mr. Phelps, that our Gracious Majesty has again sent us her munificent donation of £100 (cheers), thus proving what a friend that illustrious lady is to the dramatic art—and indeed she *is* a friend.

The CHAIRMAN: Gentlemen,—It is a fortunate circumstance for any institution depending wholly or in part, as this does, upon public sympathy for support, when it has in association with it men of high position and character, whose names are a warrant that the association, whatever it be, is worthy of the aid it seeks; and the General Theatrical Fund has certainly great reason to congratulate itself. (Hear, hear.) We have as trustees Mr. Benjamin Bond Cabbell, an active philanthropist, whose name is generally before us as an author or promoter of some scheme of practical good; we have Mr. Macready,

who, during his public career, won for himself the high esteem of the great and good throughout the land, and who now makes his private station a post of honour; and, lastly, gentlemen, we have the man whose name, wherever the Anglo-Saxon tongue is spoken, has become a "household word." (Loud cheering.) I am sure, gentlemen, you will feel with me that any attempt on my part to pronounce a eulogy upon that gentleman would be simply absurd, and I assure you that I should feel myself almost guilty of an act of impertinence were I to attempt it. Gentlemen, will you join with me in drinking the "Health of Mr. Dickens and his Fellow Trustees?" (Loud cheers.)

MR. DICKENS, who, on rising, was enthusiastically cheered for some moments, said: Gentlemen, I have to acknowledge the toast which has been associated by our chairman with such flattering encomiums, and by you with so kind a welcome. Before I do so, I wish to offer a word of explanation in reference to a very startling remark which has fallen from my right hon. friend, the member for the Haymarket. (Laughter and cheers.) Gentlemen, God forbid that I should have any electioneering designs upon any constituency whatever. My way of life, my delight in life, my means of usefulness in life, such as they are, have long been chosen, and I assure you that I have no intention of canvassing any sects whatever, except that sex whose presence I feel behind me (laughter), of whose presence I also have a deep perception, appropriately seated in the clouds above me; and that other sex whose presence I see before me. (Renewed laughter.) Gentlemen, with this word of explanation, allow me, as one of your trustees, to express the gratification that we feel, in which I have no doubt you participate, in the very prosperous budget which has been presented to us to-night by my right hon. friend, and allow me also to express our great satisfaction in finding him, notwithstanding the very frequent appeals he makes to his constituents, still holding the post of Chancellor of the Exchequer. (Much laughter.) If he should ever, in another phase of that office, as I have heard it whispered he has some deep prospective intention of doing—if he should ever relieve us of any portion of that income-tax (laughter) which he nightly levies on the public (increased laughter), I hope, as I am sure you do, that in this, and in all his enterprises, he may be triumphantly successful. (Cheers and laughter.) Gentlemen, as I have the honour in this institution to hold an official position, you will readily perceive that I should make a most interesting lengthy speech, but for the unfortunate circumstance that I am held in the bonds of official reserve (laughter), to which unhappy restraint, as the custom is in such cases, I the more gratefully submit, because I have no statement whatever to make, and nothing whatever to say. (Laughter.) I shall, therefore, content myself with thanking you on my own part, and on that of my fellow trustees, for the toast you have just drunk, and with announcing that I shall beg the chairman's permission to propose another toast when the toast-master shall have called upon you in due form to charge your glasses. (Much cheering.)

The toast-master having commanded the company to charge, and his mandate having been obeyed—

MR. DICKENS rose and said: Gentlemen,—While I agreed with every part of the excellent address which was made by the chairman in proposing the Fund, I particularly sympathized with that portion of it in which he preferred a claim on the part of the stage to be regarded as a powerful and useful means towards the education of the people. (Hear, hear.) If there ever were a time when the theatre could be considered to have a strong claim to consideration in that respect, it surely is the present. Gentlemen, we have schoolmasters going about like those horrible old women of whom we read in the police reports, perpetually flaying Whittington's cat alive—we have schoolmasters constantly demonstrating on black-boards to infant minds the utter impossibility of "Puss in Boots"; we have all the giants utterly dead and gone, with half the Jacks passing examinations every day in mental arithmetic; and with Tom Thumb really only known in these times as the gallant general seeking kisses of the ladies at 6*d.* a-head in the American market—I say really, gentlemen, in these times, when we have torn so many leaves out of our dear old nursery books, I hold it to be more than ever essential to the character of a great people, that the imagination, with all its innumerable graces and charities, should be tenderly nourished; and foremost amongst the means of training it, I agree with the chairman, must always stand the stage, with its wonderful pictures of passion, with its magnificent illusions, and with its glorious literature. (Loud cheers.) But, gentlemen, there is another aspect to which the chairman could not with equal modesty advert, in which a thoroughly well-conducted theatre is of vast importance—that is, not only with reference to the public, who so greatly need it, but as a means of sustaining the honour and credit of the dramatic profession itself—as a means of presenting their usefulness to the public in its most striking colours, and as a means of always sustaining them against the reproaches which ignorance and malignity have showered upon them with the only liberality of which such qualities are capable. (Cheers.) Gentlemen, an ill-conducted theatre does a world of harm, no doubt. I will not go so far as to say—for that would be going very far indeed—that it does as much harm as a thoroughly ill-conducted school, or a thoroughly ill-conducted chapel; but it does harm enough, and a great deal more. A thoroughly well-conducted theatre, on the contrary, blots out the sins of a thousand bad ones, and will surely attract to itself the goodwill and respect of great numbers of well-meaning and virtuous people, previously objectors, and will conciliate them to understand that what they dreaded in the dramatic art arose not from its use, but from its abuse—not from its exertion, but from its perversion. (Hear, hear.) Now, gentlemen, I perfectly well know that you will all agree with me, that if ever a theatre attained these ends, it is the Theatre, Sadler's Wells. (Loud cheers.) Gentlemen, that theatre, rescued from the wretchedest condition, from a condition so disgraceful, that if on any

night in the week the New River Company had poured in through its boxes, pit, and gallery—"No, no!"—the Humane Society could have hardly done a worse thing at one time than have interfered. ("No, no!") With a very bad audience—"No, no,"—I beg, in reference to that gentleman's observation who says "No," to state that I have as accurate a knowledge of that theatre as any man in the kingdom, and I say, that with one of the most *vagabond* audiences that ever went into a theatre utterly displaced from it, and with one of the most intelligent and attentive audiences ever seen attracted to it and retained in it—I believe I am not very wrong in my rough calculation when I say, that that theatre has been open under Mr. Phelps's management 3,000 nights, and that during 2,000 of those nights the author represented has been Shakespeare. (Cheers.) Gentlemen, add for the other thousand nights sterling old plays, tragedies, and comedies, many new plays of great merit, accepted with a real sense of managerial responsibility, and paid for, as I have reason to know in the case of a friend, with a spirit and liberality that would have done honour to the old days of the two great theatres—add to that, that all these plays have been produced with the same beauty, with the same delicacy and taste, with the same sensible subservience of the scene-painter and the mechanist to the real meaning of the play—(cheers)—and with the same indebtedness to the creator of the whole for his admirable impersonation of a great variety of most opposite and diversified characters, and surely we must all agree, to say the very least, that the public is under a great debt to the profession—is under a great debt of obligation to Mr. Phelps—and that it has a strong legitimate interest in the continued success of his undertaking. (Cheers.) Gentlemen, for the public I can only say, that so far as I know it, I have never mixed with any grade or class of it by whom those exertions have failed to be held in the highest respect, or from whom they have failed to elicit the highest approval; and it may be worthy of remark, that I have found this feeling to exist quite as strongly amongst the intelligent artist classes of Paris as here in London. Gentlemen, on the other hand, for the profession, Mr. Phelps's position here to-night, and our recognition of him in it, are an ample and sufficient answer. He is here before you in a double capacity—firstly, as the mind of the theatre in which the English drama has found a home, and in which the most graceful homage is rendered to the noblest of all dramatists—that he has there a body of students behind the curtain, and a body of students before the curtain, striving together to appreciate and extol him; Mr. Phelps is also here in the other capacity of one whose life and labour are a constant credit, and a constant honour too, and a constant sustainer of the dignity and credit of his art. (Loud cheers.) Gentlemen, in this double capacity I am perfectly sure you are ready, for the second time, to give Mr. Phelps a double welcome. I am perfectly sure you will receive the toast, which is his health, with a double acclamation, and that you will unite in a double expression of your best wishes for his success, health, happiness, and prosperity.

MR. PHELPS, who, on rising, was most loudly and enthusiastically cheered, said: Gentlemen,—I dare say in this large world of London there are a great many used-up men who would give something considerable to have excited in them a new sensation. Gentlemen, this is the second time in my life that I ever entered a public room, and I assure you that you have impressed one upon me, and one which I should be very glad to transfer to any used-up man that required it, because with it you have imposed upon me an obligation which I find some difficulty in acquitting myself of. I have often laughed when reading—for I never saw it but once—of gentlemen in my position being highly complimented in a public assembly, frequently saying, upon rising, they want words to express their feelings. (Laughter.) Gentlemen, I assure you that I shall never laugh again, for I plead guilty to being in the same position myself at the present moment. While listening just now to what Mr. Dickens has so kindly said of me, and believing from the equally kind way in which you responded to it, that I am at all events a decent member of society—(cheers)—a circumstance occurred to my mind which I had almost forgotten, for it was too contemptible to remain there long. It occurred to me just now, however, and it may perhaps afford you some little amusement if I relate it. Some years after I had established myself in Sadler's Wells Theatre, and had lived for an equal number of years in the house that I at present inhabit, believing myself to be performing tolerably well the duties of a good citizen, and acting *paterfamilias* to my entire satisfaction, it so happened that I required to place one of my family, a very young lady indeed,—seven or eight years of age, I will not be positive which,—but it so happened that I required to place her in what is commonly called an educational establishment, and being so excessively young, I was anxious to do so in some place near my home, not liking to send her at that tender age to her sisters, who were educating abroad. At length I found what I conceived to be the very thing. A lady residing very near my own house professed to receive under her roof a very limited number of pupils indeed. I think ten or a dozen was the extent, and being very select it was rather expensive. (Laughter.) But, however, I thought it would answer my purpose exceedingly well. Accordingly my little girl was consigned to the care of this lady. She was with her some few weeks, and I heard from her governess that she was an exceedingly amiable child, and remarkably intelligent—much more so, if I remember right, she told me, than any other of her ten or a dozen pupils. Of course, I was very much pleased to hear that. Time went on, and a half year's vacation occurred. The little girl came home—the vacation expired—she went back to school, and was sent home again. Good God! I thought, what is amiss? What horrid crime can that little wretch have perpetrated? (Laughter.) Her mother started off in alarm, and had an interview with the schoolmistress, who thus explained herself:—"I have under my roof three young ladies, sisters—daughters, Mrs. Phelps, of a gentleman who is an immediate

neighbour of yours. He has been to me, and threatened to remove his three daughters from under my roof if I persist in receiving little Miss Phelps as a pupil, for he will not allow his children to be educated under the same roof with an actor's." (Laughter.) Gentlemen, the moral of this story is, that, either in honouring my name as you have just done, you have evidently committed a great error, or the gentleman in question acted the part of a great fool. (Cheers and laughter.) Gentlemen, I have somewhat wandered from my subject, but I really thought, in the middle of the nineteenth century, such an anecdote might afford you some little amusement. It never afforded me anything else, I assure you. (Cheers.) Gentlemen, I will now propose as a toast, if you please, in its widest and fullest sense, "The Drama," and above all dramas, the great, the magnificent, national drama of England, and I beg to couple with that toast the name of my friend and fellow-labourer, Mr. Creswick. (Loud and prolonged cheering.)

The toast having been duly responded to, and three times three having been given, Mr. Creswick returned thanks; after which Mr. Mark Lemon proposed "The Ladies," a toast which was enthusiastically received, and honoured with three times three.

LIST OF PLAYS

PRODUCED BY MR. PHELPS AT SADLER'S WELLS.

Macbeth.	The Priest's Daughter.
Othello.	Richard III.
The Stranger.	Wild Oats.
The Jealous Wife.	The Soldier's Daughter.
Werner.	The Iron Chest.
The Merchant of Venice.	Henry VIII.
The School for Scandal.	Every One Has His Fault.
Virginus.	William Tell.
The Rivals.	The King's Friend.
Hamlet.	The Florentines.
The Wife.	Richelieu.
The Road to Ruin.	Love.
The Bridal.	The Gamester.
A New Way to Pay Old Debts.	Venice Preserved.
King John.	The Fatal Dowry.
The City Madam.	The Hunchback.
The Lady of Lyons.	Isabella.
The Wonder.	Pizarro.

- King Lear.
 Evadne.
 The Winter's Tale.
 Douglas.
 Money.
 Jane Shore.
 Judge Jeffries.
 Henry IV., Part I.
 Julius Cæsar.
 Love's Sacrifice.
 The Patrician's Daughter.
 Romeo and Juliet.
 Measure for Measure.
 Damon and Pythias.
 Ion.
 A King and No King.
 Feudal Times.
 The Tempest.
 Town and Country.
 Bertram.
 Cymbeline.
 The Provost of Bruges.
 The Heir at Law.
 John Savile of Haysted.
 The Poor Gentleman.
 As You Like It.
 The Steward.
 Twelfth Night.
 The Merry Wives of Windsor.
 The Way to Keep Him.
 Coriolanus.
 Rule a Wife and Have a Wife.
 Much Ado About Nothing.
 A Blot in the 'Scutcheon.
 The Honest Man's Fortune.
 All in the Wrong.
 Calaynos.
 The Will.
 The Castle Spectre.
 The Honeymoon.
 The School of Reform.
 The Belle's Stratagem.
 The Love Chase.
 She Would and She Would Not.
 Antony and Cleopatra.
 The Busy Body.
 She Stoops to Conquer.
 Garcia.
 Retribution.
 Fazio.
 The Mountaineers.
 A Bold Stroke for a Husband.
 The Legend of Florence.
 The Cavalier.
 The Duchess of Malfi.
 Brutus.
 The Good Natured Man.
 Man and Wife.
 The Bride of Ludgate.
 The Prisoner of War.
 Timon of Athens.
 Secrets Worth Knowing.
 Ingomar.
 The Critic.
 The Man of the World.
 The Provoked Husband.
 James VI.
 The West Indian.
 All's Well that Ends Well.
 The Merchant's Wedding.
 A Woman Never Vext.
 Might and Right.
 King Henry V.
 Speed the Plough.
 Henry IV., Part II.
 Pericles, Prince of Tyre.
 The Comedy of Errors.
 The Two Gentlemen of Verona.
 Love's Labour's Lost.
 Louis XI.
 The Fool's Revenge.
 A Midsummer Night's Dream
 Hamilton of Bothwellhaugh.
 The Taming of the Shrew.
 The Clandestine Marriage.
 The Wheel of Fortune.
 Rob Roy.

Plays produced by Mr. Macready during his four seasons of management.

THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT GARDEN.

SEASON, 1837 and 1838. 209 NIGHTS.

FIRST PIECES.	TIMES REPRESENTED.	FIRST PIECES.	TIMES REPRESENTED.
Amilie, or The Love Test	33	Love in a Village	... 1
As You Like It	...	Lord of the Manor	... 1
Bridal	... 7	Macbeth	... 18
Barbers of Bassora	... 4	Marriage of Figaro	... 1
Coriolanus	... 8	Novice	... 3
Guy Mannering	... 1	Othello	... 3
Hamlet	... 3	Provoked Husband	... 3
Hunchback	... 2	Rob Roy	... 2
Hypocrite	... 2	Riches	... 1
Ion	... 1	Romeo and Juliet	... 2
Joan of Arc	... 5	Stranger	... 1
Julius Cæsar	... 2	Two Foscari	... 3
Jane Shore	... 1	Venice Preserved	... 2
Jealous Wife	... 1	Virginus	... 2
King Lear	... 10	Winter's Tale	... 4
King Henry V.	... 2	Werner	... 10
King Henry VIII.	... 2	Wonder	... 3
Lady of Lyons	... 33	Woman's Wit	... 31

SEASON, 1838 and 1839. 222 NIGHTS.

FIRST PIECES.	TIMES REPRESENTED.	FIRST PIECES.	TIMES REPRESENTED.
As You Like It	... 4	Othello	... 8
Coriolanus	... 3	Pantomime	... 1
Cymbeline	... 2	Provoked Husband	... 1
Cato	... 1	Rob Roy	... 3
Foresters	... 1	Richelieu	... 37
Hamlet	... 5	Stranger	... 1
Hunchback	... 3	Town and Country	... 1
Henrique	... 5	Tempest	... 55
Ion	... 3	Two Foscari	... 1
Jane Shore	... 2	Venice Preserved	... 1
Julius Cæsar	... 1	Virginus	... 1
King Lear	... 6	Winter's Tale	... 3
King Henry V.	... 21	Werner	... 4
Lady of Lyons	... 29	William Tell	... 14
Macbeth	... 5		

THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE.

SEASON, 1841 and 1842. 116 NIGHTS.

FIRST PIECES.	TIMES REPRESENTED.	FIRST PIECES.	TIMES REPRESENTED.
Acis and Galatea	... 29	Marino Faliero	... 2
Duenna	... 1	Othello	... 1
Every One Has His Fault	8	Point of Honour	... 3
Gamester	... 5	Plighted Troth	... 1
Gisippus	... 20	Provoked Husband	... 1
Hamlet	... 4	Stranger	... 1
Merchant of Venice	... 15	Two Gentlemen of Verona	14
Macbeth	... 8	Venice Preserved	... 3

SEASON, 1842 and 1843. 183 NIGHTS.

FIRST PIECES.	TIMES REPRESENTED.	FIRST PIECES.	TIMES REPRESENTED.
As You Like It	... 22	Lady of Lyons	... 12
Acis and Galatea	... 7	Marino Faliero	... 2
Athelwold	... 2	Macbeth	... 10
Blot in the 'Scutcheon	3	Much Ado About Nothing	12
Cymbeline	... 4	Othello	... 11
Duenna	... 1	Provoked Husband	... 1
Der Freischutz	... 1	Patrician's Daughter	... 11
Gamester	... 1	Rivals	... 3
Hamlet	... 6	Road to Ruin	... 2
Jane Shore	... 1	Stranger	... 1
Julius Cæsar	... 3	She Stoops to Conquer	... 1
Jealous Wife	... 1	Sappho	... 13
King John	... 26	Secretary	... 3
King Arthur	... 3	School for Scandal	... 1
King Henry IV.	... 2	Virginus	... 2
Katharine and Petruchio	1	Werner	... 2
Love for Love	... 8	Winter's Tale	... 2
La Gazza Ladra	... 2		

Plays produced by Mr. Phelps during his first four seasons of management.

THEATRE ROYAL, SADLER'S WELLS.

SEASON, 1844 and 1845. 262 NIGHTS.

FIRST PIECES.	TIMES REPRESENTED.	FIRST PIECES.	TIMES REPRESENTED.
A New Way to Pay Old Debts	3	Provoked Husband ...	2
Bridal	30	Priest's Daughter ...	10
City Madam	16	Rivals	8
Hamlet	33	Road to Ruin	4
Hunchback	2	Richard III.	24
Iron Chest	3	Stranger	8
Jealous Wife	3	School for Scandal ...	6
King John	18	Soldier's Daughter ...	3
King Henry VIII. ...	1	The Wife	5
Lady of Lyons	63	Virginus	4
Macbeth	14	Werner	8
Merchant of Venice ...	6	Wonder	2
Othello	10	Wild Oats	3

SEASON, 1845 and 1846. 296 NIGHTS.

FIRST PIECES.	TIMES REPRESENTED.	FIRST PIECES.	TIMES REPRESENTED.
Bridal	7	King Lear	10
Brutus	6	Love	10
Douglas	4	Lady of Lyons	14
Every One Has His Fault	3	Merchant of Venice ...	2
Evadne	4	Macbeth	10
Florentines	9	Money	15
Fatal Dowry	13	Othello	5
Gamester	14	Pizarro	12
Henry VIII.	3	Richelieu	37
Hunchback	2	Stranger	7
Hamlet	9	Venice Preserved ...	2
Isabella	7	Virginus	5
Jane Shore	6	William Tell	11
Judge Jeffries	9	Werner	3
Julius Cæsar	1	Winter's Tale	45
King's Friend	11		

THEATRE ROYAL, SADLER'S WELLS.

SEASON, 1846 and 1847. 252 NIGHTS.

FIRST PIECES.	TIMES REPRESENTED.	FIRST PIECES.	TIMES REPRESENTED.
A King and No King	... 12	Merchant of Venice	... 11
Bertram	... 5	Money	... 12
Damon and Pythias	... 3	Othello	... 6
Feudal Times	... 25	Patrician's Daughter	... 13
Gamester	... 7	Provost of Bruges	... 1
Henry IV., Part I.	... 16	Romeo and Juliet	... 15
Hunchback	... 6	Rivals	... 2
Honeymoon	... 2	Road to Ruin	... 3
Hypocrite	... 2	Stranger	... 7
Isabella	... 6	School for Scandal	... 2
Ion	... 2	The Wife	... 2
Jane Shore	... 2	The Tempest	... 22
Julius Cæsar	... 9	Town and Country	... 4
Love's Sacrifice	... 7	Virginus	... 4
Lady of Lyons	... 29	Venice Preserved	... 2
Measure for Measure	... 13		

SEASON, 1847 and 1848. 193 NIGHTS.

FIRST PIECES.	TIMES REPRESENTED.	FIRST PIECES.	TIMES REPRESENTED.
As You Like It	... 12	Lady of Lyons	... 6
Bridal	... 10	Love	... 2
Cymbeline	... 23	Macbeth	... 20
Evadne	... 3	Money	... 8
Gamester	... 1	Merry Wives of Windsor	... 12
Honeymoon	... 4	Provost of Bruges	... 4
Heir at Law	... 2	Patrician's Daughter	... 6
Hamlet	... 12	Poor Gentlemen	... 2
Hunchback	... 2	Road to Ruin	... 2
Isabella	... 2	Stranger	... 3
Jealous Wife	... 2	Steward	... 2
John Savile of Haysted	25	Twelfth Night	... 16
King Lear	... 3	Werner	... 9

On the following pages will be found the casts of some of the principal plays produced by Mr. Phelps at Sadler's Wells, as well as a few others of great interest.

THEATRE ROYAL, SADLER'S WELLS.

Licensed by the Lord Chamberlain, under the Act 6 & 7 Victoria, cap. 68.

LESSEE—THOMAS LONGDEN GREENWOOD, Melbourne Cottage,
White Hart Lane, Tottenham.

Under the management of

MRS. WARNER AND MR. PHELPS,

Of the Theatres Royal, Drury Lane, Covent Garden, and Haymarket.

Whit-Monday, May 27th, 1844,

THE PERFORMANCES WILL COMMENCE WITH SHAKESPEARE'S PLAY OF

MACBETH.

With New Scenery by MESSRS. F. FENTON, MORELLI, &c.

Duncan (King of Scotland)	...	...	...	MR. WILLIAMS
Malcolm	} Sons to the King	...	...	MR. HIELD
Donalbain		...	...	MISS THORNBURY
Macbeth	} Generals of the King's Army	...	...	MR. PHELPS
Banquo		...	...	MR. H. LACY
Macduff		...	...	MR. H. MARSTON
Lenox		...	...	MR. RAYMOND
Rosse	} Noblemen of Scotland	...	...	MR. ALDRIDGE
Menteith		...	...	MR. GREGORY
Angus		...	...	MR. JOHNSON
Caithness		...	...	MR. STEWART
Fleance (Son to Banquo)	...	MISS FRANCIS	Physician	MR. FRANKS
Siward (General of the English forces)	...	...	...	MR. GRAHAM
Seyton (an Officer attending on Macbeth)	...	...	...	MR. KNIGHT
Lady Macbeth	...	...	...	MRS. WARNER
Gentlewoman (attending on Lady Macbeth)	...	...	...	MRS. H. MARSTON
Hecate	...	...	...	MR. CLEMENT WHITE
First Witch	...	...	...	MR. FORMAN
Second Witch	...	MR. WILSON	Third Witch	MR. MORELLI
First Singing Witch	...	...	...	MISS LEBATT
Second Singing Witch	...	...	...	MISS EMMA HARDING
Other Singing Witches	...	...	...	MISSES PEARCE, GRAHAM, MORELLI, MARTIN, OLIVER, and JAMESON.

In the course of the evening

AN ADDRESS (written by T. SERLE, ESQ.) will be spoken by
MRS. WARNER.

After which, a New Operetta, entitled

THE HUNTER'S BRIDE.

To conclude with a New Farce, written by MR. GREENWOOD, illustrative of
A ROW IN THE BUILDINGS.

Stage Manager, MR. PHELPS. Acting Manager, MR. T. L. GREENWOOD.
Scene Painters, MESSRS. F. FENTON, FINLAY, &c. Treasurer, MR. WARNER.
Musical Director & Composer, MR. W. MONTGOMERY.

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MRS. WARNER

MISS COOPER (of the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden)	MISS EMMA HARDING (from the Princess's Theatre)
MISS LEBATT	MRS. H. MARSTON
MR. HUDSON (of the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane)	MR. PHELPS
	MR. H. MARSTON
MR. H. LACY	MR. JOHN WEBSTER
MR. BINGE	MR. HIELD
	MR. FORMAN (of the Theatre Royal, Adelphi)

AND

Will appear every evening.

Monday, June 3rd, Tuesday 4th, Wednesday 5th, 1844,

THE PERFORMANCES WILL COMMENCE WITH SHAKESPEARE'S PLAY OF

OTHELLO,

THE MOOR OF VENICE.

With New Scenery by MESSRS. F. FENTON, MORELLI, &c.

Duke of Venice	...	...	...	...	...	...	MR. KNIGHT
Brabantio (a Senator)	...	...	...	...	...	...	MR. H. LACY
Gratiano (Brother to Brabantio)	...	...	...	...	...	...	MR. MORELLI
Ludovico (Kinsman to Brabantio)	...	...	...	...	...	...	MR. RAYMOND
Othello (the Moor)	...	...	...	...	...	...	MR. PHELPS
Cassio (his Lieutenant)	...	...	...	...	...	...	MR. HUDSON
Iago (his Ancient)	...	...	...	...	...	...	MR. H. MARSTON
Roderigo (a Venetian Gentleman)	...	...	...	...	...	...	MR. J. WEBSTER
Montano (Othello's Predecessor in the Government of Cyprus)	...	...	...	...	...	...	MR. BINGE
Antonio	...	MR. FRANKS	Julio	...	MR. SIEVIER	Marco	...
Paulo	...	MR. GREGORY				Messenger	...
Desdemona (Daughter to Brabantio and Wife to Othello)	...	...	...	...	...	...	MISS COOPER
Emilia (Wife to Iago)	...	...	...	...	...	...	MRS. WARNER

Officers, Gentlemen, Messengers, Musicians, Sailors, Attendants, &c., &c.

To be followed by the New and Successful Farce, written by
MR. GREENWOOD, illustrative of

A ROW IN THE BUILDINGS.

To conclude with the Popular Farce, entitled

WHERE SHALL I DINE?

THEATRE ROYAL,
SADLER'S WELLS.

LESSEE—THOMAS LONGDEN GREENWOOD, Melbourne Cottage,
White Hart Lane, Tottenham.

Under the Management of

MRS. WARNER AND MR. PHELPS,

Of the Theatres Royal, Drury Lane, Covent Garden, and Haymarket.

Monday, July 29th, Tuesday and Wednesday, 30th and 31st, 1844,

THE PERFORMANCES WILL COMMENCE WITH SHAKESPEARE'S TRAGEDY OF

HAMLET,

PRINCE OF DENMARK.

Claudius (King of Denmark)	...	...	...	...	MR. G. BENNETT
Hamlet (Son to the former, and Nephew to the present					
King)	...	...	...	...	MR. PHELPS
Polonius (Lord Chamberlain)	...	...	...	...	MR. A. YOUNGE
Laertes (Son to Polonius)	...	...	...	...	MR. J. WEBSTER
Horatio (Friend to Hamlet)	...	...	...	...	MR. MORTON
Osric (a Fop)	...	...	...	...	MR. CORENO
Rosencrantz	} Courtiers	...	...	...	{ MR. SHARPE
Guildenstern						{ MR. C. FENTON
Marcellus (an Officer)	...	MR. SIEVIER	Sailor	...	MR. FRANKS
Bernardo	} Two Soldiers	...	...	...	{ MR. GRAHAM
Francisco						{ MR. EVAIN
Ghost of Hamlet's Father	...	...	...	...	MR. H. MARSTON
First Player	...	MR. KNIGHT	Second Player	...	MR. MORELLI
First Gravemaker	...	MR. FORMAN	Second Gravemaker	...	MR. WILLIAMS
Gertrude (Queen of Denmark, and Mother of Hamlet)					MRS. WARNER
Ophelia (Daughter to Polonius, and beloved by Hamlet)					MISS LEBATT
Actress	...	...	...	...	MISS G. LEBATT
Ladies attending on the Queen	...	MISSSES THORNBURY, HART, PIERCE,			
		SIEVIER, and GRAYSON.			

After which the Laughable Interlude, called

BLUE DEVILS.

To conclude with the admired Farce, called

DOMINIQUE THE DESERTER,

OR, *THE GENTLEMAN IN BLACK.*

THEATRE ROYAL,
SADLER'S WELLS.

LESSEE—THOMAS LONGDEN GREENWOOD, Melbourne Cottage,
White Hart Lane, Tottenham.

Under the Management of
MRS. WARNER AND MR. PHELPS,
Of the Theatres Royal, Drury Lane, Covent Garden, and Haymarket.

For the benefit of MR. GREENWOOD.

Thursday, September 19th, 1844,

THE PERFORMANCES WILL COMMENCE WITH MASSINGER'S PLAY OF

A NEW WAY TO PAY OLD DEBTS.

Lord Lovel	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	MR. G. BENNETT	
Sir Giles Overreach	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	MR. PHELPS	
Welborn	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	MR. H. MARSTON	
Allworth	...	MR. HIGGIE					Furnace	...	MR. CORENO
Marrall	...	MR. A. YOUNGE					Justice Greedy	...	MR. FORMAN
Amble	...	MR. SHARPE					Order	...	MR. GRAHAM
Watchall	...	MR. SIEVIER					Tailor	...	MR. C. FENTON
Tapwell	...	MR. MORELLI					Vintner	...	MR. EVAIN
Lady Allworth	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	MRS. WARNER	
Margaret	...	MISS COOPER					Froth	...	MRS. H. MARSTON
Tabitha	...	MISS G. LEBATT					Abigail	...	MISS MORELLI

To be followed by the laughable Farce, called

GAME AND GAME.

To conclude with the favourite Farce, entitled

YOUTH, LOVE, AND FOLLY.

To conclude with the Amusing Farce of CAPTAIN STEVENS.

THEATRE ROYAL,
SADLER'S WELLS.

LESSEES—MESSRS. GREENWOOD, PHELPS, AND WARNER.

Under the Management of
MRS. WARNER AND MR. PHELPS.

*Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, November 5, 6, 7,
and 8, 1845,*

THE PERFORMANCES WILL COMMENCE WITH SHAKESPEARE'S TRAGEDY OF

KING LEAR.

The New Scenery by MESSRS. F. FENTON, FINLAY, and Assistants. The Stage Decorations and Properties by MR. HARVEY. The Machinery by MR. CAWDERY. The Costumes, &c., by MR. FERNIE and MISS BAILEY.

Lear (King of Britain)	MR. PHELPS
King of France ... MR. KNIGHT	Duke of Burgundy ... MR. WARDE
Duke of Cornwall ... MR. GRAHAM	Duke of Albany ... MR. MORTON
Earl of Kent ... MR. A. YOUNGE	Earl of Glo'ster ... MR. H. MELLON
Edgar (Son of Glo'ster)	MR. H. MARSTON
Edmund (Bastard Son to Glo'ster)	MR. G. BENNETT
Curan	MR. C. FENTON
Oswald (Steward to Goneril)	MR. S. BUCKINGHAM
Old Man ... MR. WILLIAMS	Physician ... MR. LINGHAM
Officer	MR. ROBERTS
Gentleman (Attendant on Cordelia)	MR. FRANKS
Fool ... MR. SCHARF	Herald ... MR. STILT
Servant to Cornwall	MR. GRAMMAR
Goneril } Daughters to Lear	{ MRS. H. MARSTON
Regan }	{ MISS HUDDART
Cordelia }	{ MISS COOPER

To conclude with the Laughable Farce of

ANIMAL MAGNETISM.

THEATRE ROYAL, SADLER'S WELLS.

LESSEES—MESSRS. GREENWOOD AND PHELPS.

This Theatre, thoroughly Repaired and Re-decorated, will be opened
for the Season under the Management of

MR. PHELPS,

On Saturday, July 25th, 1846,

WITH (FOR THE FIRST TIME HERE) THE FIRST PART OF SHAKESPEARE'S

HENRY IV.

The Scenery by MR. F. FENTON. The Costumes by MR. COOMBS and
MISS BAILEY. The Decorations and Properties by MR. HARVEY.

King Henry IV. ...	...	...	MR. G. BENNETT
Henry, Prince of Wales	} Sons to the King ...	{	MR. H. MARSTON
Prince John of Lancaster			MR. G. MASKELL
Earl of Westmoreland	} Friends to the King ...	{	MR. MONTAGUE
Sir Walter Blunt			MR. STILT
Thomas Percy, Earl of Worcester	...	...	MR. H. MELLON
Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland	...	...	MR. HOLLINGSWORTH
Henry Percy, surnamed Hotspur (his Son)	...	...	MR. CRESWICK
(His first appearance in London)			
Archibald, Earl of Douglas	...	...	MR. MORTON
Sir Richard Vernon	...	...	MR. GRAHAM
Sir John Falstaff	...	...	MR. PHELPS
Poins ... MR. HOSKINS	Gadshill ... MR. C. FENTON		
Peto ... MR. FRANKS	Bardolph ... MR. KNIGHT	Francis ... MR. SCHARF	
Chamberlain ... MR. WILKINS	Travellers ... MESSRS. SCOLEY & MASON		
First Carrier ... MR. A. YOUNGE	Second Carrier ... MR. WILLIAMS		
Lady Percy (Wife to Hotspur, and Sister to Mortimer)	...	MRS. BROUGHAM	
Mrs. Quickly (Hostess of a Tavern in East Chepe)	...	MRS. H. MARSTON	
Lords, Officers, Sheriffs, Vintners, Chamberlains, Drawers, Travellers, and Attendants.			

To conclude with the Petite Comedy, by C. DANCE, ESQ., of

NAVAL ENGAGEMENTS.

Stage Manager, MR. PHELPS. Acting Manager, MR. T. L. GREENWOOD.
The Decorations and Properties by MR. HARVEY.
Scene Painters, MESSRS. F. FENTON and FINLAY. Machinist, MR. CAWDERY.
The Costumes by MR. COOMBS and MISS BAILEY.
Musical Director, MR. W. MONTGOMERY.

THEATRE ROYAL,
SADLER'S WELLS.

LESSEES—MESSRS. GREENWOOD AND PHELPS.

Under the Management of
MR. PHELPS.

*Wednesday, January 13th, Thursday 14th, Friday 15th, and
Saturday 16th, 1847,*

WILL BE PERFORMED (FOR THE FIRST TIME) BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER'S
PLAY (WITH ALTERATIONS) OF

A KING AND NO KING.

Arbaces (King of Iberia)	...	...	...	...	MR. PHELPS
Tigranes (King of Armenia)	...	...	...	...	MR. H. MARSTON
Gobrias (Lord Protector)	...	...	...	...	MR. H. MELLON
Bacurius	...	...	...	...	MR. HOSKINS
Mardonius	} Two Captains	...	...	...	{ MR. A. YOUNGE MR. G. BENNETT
Bessus					
Lygones (Father of Spaconia)	...	...	...	...	MR. GRAHAM
Gentlemen	...	...	MESSRS. BRANSON, C. FENTON, and SCOLEY		
Swordsmen	...	...	...	...	MESSRS. KNIGHT and SCHARF
Messenger	...	MR. FRANKS	Servant to Bacurius	...	MR. FITZGERALD
Boy	...	MASTER HEIR	Attendants, Guards, &c.		
Arane (the Queen Mother)	...	...	...	...	MRS. H. MARSTON
Panthea (her Daughter)	...	...	...	...	MISS LAURA ADDISON
Spaconia (Daughter of Lygones)	...	...	...	...	MISS COOPER

To be followed by an Interlude entitled

THE SILENT WOMAN.

Mr. Sandford	...	MR. WILLIAMS	Mr. Arthur Merton	...	MR. HOSKINS
Miss Sandford	...	...	...	...	MISS COOPER

To conclude with (for the 16th time) a Grand Comic Christmas
Pantomime, entitled

HARLEQUIN AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR,
OR, THE WHITE CAT AND
THE KING AND HIS THREE SONS.

THEATRE ROYAL,
SADLER'S WELLS.

LESSEES—MESSRS. GREENWOOD AND PHELPS.

Under the Management of
MR. PHELPS.

*Wednesday, January 26th, Thursday 27th, Friday 28th, and
Saturday 29th, 1848,*

WILL BE PERFORMED (FOR THE FIRST TIME AT THIS THEATRE)

SHAKESPEARE'S COMEDY OF

TWELFTH NIGHT;

OR, WHAT YOU WILL.

With New Scenery, Dresses, and Decorations.

Orsini, Duke of Illyria	...	...	...	...	MR. HENRY MARSTON
Sebastian (a Young Gentleman, Brother of Viola)	...	...	...	...	MR. GRAHAM
Antonio (a Sea Captain, Friend of Sebastian)	...	...	...	...	MR. HARRINGTON
Valentine	} Gentlemen attending on the Duke	...	...	...	MR. WILKINS
Curio		...	...	...	MR. G. MASKELL
Sir Toby Belch (Uncle of Olivia)	...	...	...	...	MR. GEORGE BENNETT
Sir Andrew Aguecheek	...	...	...	...	MR. A. YOUNGE
Malvolio (Steward to Olivia)	...	...	...	...	MR. PHELPS
Fabian	} Servants to Olivia	...	...	...	MR. H. MELLON
Clown		...	...	...	MR. SCHARF
A Priest	...	MR. KNIGHT	Roberto (a Sea Captain)	...	MR. C. FENTON
First Officer	...	MR. FRANKS	Second Officer	...	MR. JACKSON
Gentlemen, Servants, Sailors, &c.					
Olivia (a Rich Countess)	...	...	...	...	MISS COOPER
Viola (in love with the Duke)	...	...	...	...	MISS LAURA ADDISON
Maria (Olivia's Woman)	...	...	...	...	MRS. H. MARSTON

Scene—A City in Illyria, with the Sea Coast near it.

To conclude with (for the 27th, 28th, 29th, and 30th times) a Grand
Comic Christmas Pantomime, entitled

HARLEQUIN AND LITTLE GREAT BRITAIN;

OR,

JACK AND THE BEAN-STALK,

AND THE OGRE'S GOLDEN HEN.

THEATRE ROYAL, SADLER'S WELLS.

LESSEES—MESSRS. GREENWOOD AND PHELPS.

This Theatre will be Opened for the Season under the Management of
MR. PHELPS,

*On Wednesday, September 27th, Thursday 28th, Friday 29th, and
Saturday 30th, 1848,*

WHEN WILL BE PRESENTED (FOR THE FIRST TIME AT THIS THEATRE)
SHAKESPEARE'S PLAY OF

CORIOLANUS.

With New Scenery, Dresses, and Decorations.

The Scenery by MR. FENTON and MR. A. FINLAY. The Decorations and
Properties by MR. HARVEY. The Costumes by MR. COOMBS and
MISS BAILEY.

Caius Marcius Coriolanus (a Noble Roman)	MR. PHELPS
Titus Lartius } Generals against the Volscians	{ MR. KNIGHT
Cominius }	{ MR. G. BENNETT
Menenius Agrippa (Friend to Coriolanus)	MR. A. YOUNGE
Sicinius Velutus } Tribunes of the People	{ MR. H. MELLON
Junius Brutus }	{ MR. GRAHAM
Young Marcius (Son to Coriolanus)	MASTER WEBSTER
Tullus Aufidius (General of the Volscians)	MR. H. MARSTON
Volusius (Lieutenant to Aufidius)	MR. HARRINGTON
Proculus and Quintius (Senators)	MR. STILT and MR. PEARCE
Servius } Servants to Aufidius	{ MR. BROWN
Cotus }	{ MR. EDWARDS
Nautius }	{ MR. ROBINSON
Rutilius (a Citizen of Antium)	MR. CHARLES
Flavius } Messengers of Rome	{ MR. C. FENTON
Appius }	{ MR. GLADSTONE
First Citizen ... MR. SCHARF	Second Citizen ... MR. WILLIAMS
Third Citizen ... MR. WILKINS	Fourth Citizen ... MR. FRANKS
Fifth Citizen ... MR. HARRIS	Sixth Citizen ... MR. DOLMAN
Roman and Volscian Senators, Patricians, Ædiles, Lictors, Citizens, Messengers, Attendants, and Soldiers.	
Volumnia (Mother to Coriolanus)	MISS GLYN
Virgilia (Wife to Coriolanus)	MISS COOPER
Valeria (Friend to Virgilia)	MRS. H. MARSTON
Servilia (Virgilia's Gentlewoman)	MISS MORELLI
Scene—Partly in Rome, and partly in the Territories of the Volscians and Antiates.	

To conclude with DANCE's admired Comedietta of

A MATCH IN THE DARK.

Mr. Clement ... MR. WILLIAMS	Captain Courteney ... MR. HOSKINS
Vellum (a Clerk) ... MR. SCHARF	O'Flynn ... MR. H. MELLON
Miss Ellen Marsden	MISS COOPER
Mrs. Prudence McIntyre	MRS. H. MARSTON

THEATRE ROYAL,
SADLER'S WELLS.

LESSEES—MESSRS. GREENWOOD AND PHELPS.

Under the Management of MR. PHELPS.

Monday, November 27th, Tuesday 28th, Wednesday 29th, 1848,

WILL BE PRODUCED A TRAGEDY, IN THREE ACTS, BY ROBERT BROWNING, ESQ.,
ENTITLED

A BLOT IN THE 'SCUTCHEON.

With New Scenery, Dresses, and Decorations.

The Scenery by MR. F. FENTON and MR. BRUNNING. The Decorations and
Properties by MR. HARVEY. The Costumes by MR. COOMBS and

MISS BAILEY.

Thorold, Lord Tresham	...	...	...	...	...	...	MR. PHELPS
Austin Tresham	...	...	...	...	...	...	MR. HOSKINS
Henry, Earl Mertoun	...	...	...	...	...	...	MR. G. K. DICKINSON
Gerard	...	...	...	...	...	...	MR. GRAHAM
Ralph	} Retainers of Lord Tresham	...	...	...	...	}	MR. HARRINGTON
Frank							MR. C. FENTON
Richard							MR. KNIGHT
Walter							MR. STILT
Philip							MR. FRANKS
Peter							MR. WILKINS
Mildred Tresham	...	...	...	...	...	...	MISS COOPER
Guendolin Tresham	...	...	...	...	...	...	MISS HUDDART

Previous to the Farce the Band will perform

QUADRILLE "The Bondman" *Coote*

After which an Interlude, entitled

THE LONDON LADY.

To conclude with POOLE'S Farce of

THE SCAPEGOAT.

THEATRE ROYAL, SADLER'S WELLS.

LESSEES—MESSRS. GREENWOOD AND PHELPS.

Under the Management of MR. PHELPS.

Monday, Oct. 22nd, Tuesday 23rd, Wednesday 24th, Thursday 25th, 1849,

WILL BE PRESENTED (FIRST TIME AT THIS THEATRE) THE TRAGEDY OF

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA,

FROM THE TEXT OF SHAKESPEARE.

With New Scenery, Dresses, and Decorations.

The Scenery by MR. F. FENTON.

Marc Antony	} Triumvirs of Rome	{ MR. PHELPS
Octavius Cæsar		
M. Æmilius Lepidus		
Sextus Pompeius		
Domitius Enobarbus		MR. G. K. DICKINSON
Ventidius		MR. HOSKINS
Eros		MR. HENRY MARSTON
Scarus	} Friends to Antony	MR. G. BENNETT
Dercetas		MR. SCOLEY
Demetrius		MR. GRAHAM
Philo		MR. FROST
Mecænas	} Friends to Cæsar	MR. SMYTHSON
Agrippa		MR. THOMAS
Dolabella		MR. MARCHANT
Proculeius		MR. HAMILTON
Thyreus		MR. H. MELLON
Gallus		MR. RIVERS
Menas	} Friends to Pompey	MR. WILKINS
Menecrates		MR. H. LEE
Varrius		MR. DOLMAN
Canidius (Lieutenant-General to Antony) ...		MR. KNIGHT
Euphronius (an Ambassador from Antony to Cæsar) ...		MR. W. PITT
Mardian		MR. FRANKS
Alexas	} Attendants on Cleopatra	MR. HARRIS
Diomedes		MR. KENDALL
A Soothsayer ... MR. WILLIAMS		MR. BELFORD
Officers, Sentinels, Messengers, Eunuchs, Guards, Dancers, &c.		MRS. GRAHAM
Cleopatra (Queen of Egypt)		MR. C. FENTON
Octavia (Sister to Cæsar, and Wife to Antony) ...		MR. HENRY NYE
Charmian	} Attendants on Cleopatra	MISS GLYN
Iras		MISS ALDRIDGE
		MISS T. BASSANO
		MRS. G. SMITH

Scene—Dispersed in several parts of the Roman Empire.

To conclude with (for the Third Time) a Farce, by W. MONCRIEFF, entitled

THE MISTRESS OF THE MILL.

THEATRE ROYAL,
SADLER'S WELLS.

LESSEES—MESSRS. GREENWOOD AND PHELPS.

Under the Management of MR. PHELPS.

FOR THE BENEFIT OF MR. PHELPS,

On Wednesday, March 20th, 1850,

WILL BE PRESENTED (FIRST TIME THESE THREE YEARS) SHAKESPEARE'S
TRAGEDY OF

MACBETH,

FROM THE ORIGINAL TEXT.

Duncan (King of Scotland)	...	...	...	MR. H. MELLON
Malcolm	} Sons to the King	...	...	{ MR. G. K. DICKINSON
Donalbain		...	...	{ MISS JOHNSON
Macbeth	} Generals of the King's Army	...	...	{ MR. PHELPS
Banquo		...	...	{ MR. G. BENNETT
Lennox	} Noblemen of Scotland	...	...	{ MR. BELFORD
Macduff		...	...	{ MR. H. MARSTON
Rosse		...	...	{ MR. GRAHAM
Menteith		...	...	{ MR. HARRIS
Angus		...	...	{ MR. PHILIPS
Caithness		...	...	{ MR. EDWARDS
Fleance (Son to Banquo)	...	...	...	MASTER RIGHTON
Siward (General of the English Forces)	...	...	...	MR. EDMONDS
Physician ... MR. WILLIAMS	...	...	...	Young Siward ... MR. C. FENTON
Son to Macduff	...	...	...	MISS BULLEN
Seyton (an Officer attending on Macduff)	...	...	...	MR. KNIGHT
First Murderer ... MR. HOWE	...	...	...	Second Murderer ... MR. DOLMAN
Third Murderer ... MR. CHARLCOT	...	...	...	Messenger ... MR. THOMAS
Attendant ... MR. FRANKS	...	...	...	Porter ... MR. H. NYE
Lady Macbeth	...	...	...	MISS GLYN
Lady Macduff	...	...	...	MISS EDWARDES
Gentlewoman (Attending on Lady Macbeth)	...	...	...	MRS. G. SMITH
Hecate	...	...	...	MR. RIVERS
Three Witches	...	...	...	MESSRS. A. YOUNGE, WILKINS, and HOSKINS

To conclude with KENNY'S Farce of

RAISING THE WIND.

Mr. Plainway	...	...	...	...	MR. WILLIAMS
Fainwoud	...	...	...	...	MR. HENRY NYE
Jeremy Diddler	...	...	...	...	MR. PHELPS
Sam	...	...	...	...	Richard ... MR. FRANKS
John	...	...	...	...	Waiter ... MR. WILKINS
Peggy	...	...	...	...	MISS T. BASSANO
Miss Durable	...	...	...	...	MRS. BROUGHAM

THEATRE ROYAL, SADLER'S WELLS.

LESSEES—MESSRS. GREENWOOD AND PHELPS.

Under the Management of MR. PHELPS.

Wednesday, Nov. 20th, Thursday 21st, Friday 22nd, Saturday 23rd, 1850,

WILL BE PRODUCED A TRAGEDY, IN FIVE ACTS, BY

JOHN WEBSTER (1612), ENTITLED

THE DUCHESS OF MALFI.

Re-constructed for Stage Representation by R. H. HORNE.

With New Scenery, Dresses, and Decorations.

"The Duchess of Malfi is distinguished by the same kind of beauties as the Author's *Vittoria Corombona*, and clad in the same terrors. This is not the bandying of idle words and rhetorical common-places, but the writhing and conflict, and the sublime colloquy of man's nature with itself."—*Hazlitt*.

"He (John Webster) had no pretensions to the inexhaustible wit of Shakespeare, but he had the power of approaching the terrible energy of his passion, and the profoundness of his pathos, in characters which he took out of the great muster-roll of humanity, and placed in fearful situations."—*Charles Knight*.

"To move a horror skilfully—to touch a soul to the quick—to lay upon fear as much as it can bear—to wean and weary a life till it is ready to drop, and then step in with mortal instruments to take its last forfeit—this, only a Webster can do."—*Charles Lamb*.

PREVIOUS TO THE PLAY,

A PROLOGUE, written by R. H. HORNE, will be spoken by MR. HOSKINS.

Ferdinand (Duke of Calabria and Lord of Tarragona)	MR. PHELPS
Cardinal Gragiani (his Brother)	MR. GRAHAM
Malateste (Prince of Albano)	MR. H. MELLON
Antonio Bologna (Steward to the Duchess) ...	MR. WALLER
Delio (a Friend to Antonio)	MR. C. WHEATLEIGH
Bosola (a Man of desperate Fortunes)	MR. G. BENNETT
Silvio (a Nobleman of Rome)	MR. C. FENTON
Castruccio (an old Lord) } Courtiers attached to the	{ MR. WILKINS
Grisolan } Household of the Duchess	{ MR. C. STILT
Physician to the Court	MR. KNIGHT
Servant to the Duchess ... MR. FRANKS	Executioner ... MR. MEAGRESON

Lords, Pages, Ladies, Servants, Executioners, Soldiers, &c., &c.

Marina (Duchess of Malfi, Sister of the Duke and the Cardinal) MISS GLYN
 Giuseppa (a Lady of the Court, Wife of Castruccio) ... MRS. ARCHBOLD
 Cariola (Confidential Lady Attendant on the Duchess) ... MISS GRAHAM
 The Two Children of the Duchess ... MASTER and MISS HARVEY

N.B.—A Lapse of Two Years between the First and Second Acts.

To conclude with an Original Drama, by JOHN DALY, in Two Acts, entitled

BROKEN TOYS.

THEATRE ROYAL,
SADLER'S WELLS.

LESSEES—MESSRS. GREENWOOD AND PHELPS.

Under the Management of MR. PHELPS.

*Monday, September 15th, Tuesday 16th, Wednesday 17th, and
Thursday 18th, 1851,*

WILL BE PRODUCED SHAKESPEARE'S PLAY OF

TIMON OF ATHENS.

With New Scenery, Dresses, and Decorations.

The Scenery by MR. F. FENTON. The Costumes by MR. COOMBS and
MISS BAILEY. The Properties by MR. HARVEY.

Timon (a Noble Athenian)	...	...	...	...	MR. PHELPS
Lucius	} Lords and Flatterers of Timon	...	...	{	MR. F. ROBINSON
Lucullus					MR. HOSKINS
Sempronius					MR. H. MELLON
Ventidius (one of Timon's False Friends)	...	...	...	...	MR. KNIGHT
Apemantus (a Churlish Philosopher)	...	...	...	...	MR. G. BENNETT
Flavius (Steward to Timon)	...	...	...	...	MR. GRAHAM
Alcibiades (an Athenian General)	...	...	...	...	MR. H. MARSTON
Flaminius	} Timon's Servants	...	...	{	MR. C. WHEATLEIGH
Lucilius					MR. WILKINS
Servilius					MR. C. FENTON
An Old Athenian	...	MR. WILLIAMS	Senator of Athens	...	MR. BARRETT
Jeweller	...	MR. HARRIS	A Merchant	...	MR. MARDYN
Poet	...	MR. J. W. RAY	Painter	...	MR. F. YOUNGE
Caphis	} Servants to Timon's Creditors	...	{	}	MR. G. BASSIL
Philotus					MR. EDWARDS
Titus					MR. FRANKS
Lucius					MR. MEAGRESON
Hortensius	}	...	{	}	MR. C. MORTIMER
Servant to Varro					MR. JOSEPHS
Cupid	...	...	...	...	MISS E. BULLEN
Maskers, Lords, Strangers, Senators, Pages, Thieves, Soldiers, Amazons, &c.					
Phrynia	} Mistresses to Alcibiades	...	...	{	MRS. GRAHAM
Timandra					MISS JONES

Scene—Athens and the Adjoining Woods.

To conclude with DIEDIN'S Musical Farce of

THE WATERMAN.

THEATRE ROYAL, SADLER'S WELLS.

LESSEES—MESSRS. GREENWOOD AND PHELPS.

Under the Management of Mr. PHELPS.

This Evening, Thursday, November 27th, 1851,
WILL BE PRODUCED (FIRST TIME AT THIS THEATRE) MACKLIN'S
COMEDY OF

THE MAN OF THE WORLD.

Lord Lumbercourt ...	MR. BARRETT	Egerton ...	MR. F. ROBINSON
Sir Pertinax Macsycophant ...	(First Time)	...	MR. PHELPS
Sidney ...	MR. GRAHAM	Counsellor Plausible ...	MR. WILKINS
Melville ...	MR. H. MELLON	Sergeant Eitherside ...	MR. WILLIAMS
Sam ...	MR. MEAGRESON	Tomkins ...	MR. C. MORTIMER
John ...	...	...	MR. C. FENTON
Lady Rodolpha Lumbercourt ...	...	...	MISS FITZPATRICK
Lady Macsycophant ...	...	...	MRS. H. MARSTON
Constantia ...	MISS LUCY RAFTER	Nanny ...	MRS. GRAHAM
Betty Hint ...	...	...	MISS ELIZA TRAVERS

POLKA "The May" *H. S. May.*

Published by JEWELL and LETCHFORD, 17, Soho Square.

To conclude with (for the First Time under the present Management)
PLANCHÉ'S Drama of

THE JEWESS.

The Emperor Sigismund ...	...	MR. KNIGHT
Prince Leopold ...	...	MR. F. ROBINSON
Cardinal de Brogny (President of the Council) ...	...	MR. G. BENNETT
The Bishop of Constance ...	...	MR. WILLIAMSON
Albert ...	MR. HARRIS	Provost of Constance ... MR. WILKINS
Eleazar ...	...	MR. HENRY MARSTON
Page to the Princess ...	...	MISS LUCY RAFTER
Prelates, Knights, Herald, Pages, Attendants, Guards, &c.		
The Princess Eudocia ...	...	MISS ELIZA TRAVERS
Rachel (the Jewess) ...	...	MISS GODDARD

This Evening the Performances will be for the Benefit of
MR. T. L. GREENWOOD, Acting Manager.

THEATRE ROYAL, SADLER'S WELLS.

LESSEES—MESSRS. GREENWOOD AND PHELPS.

Under the Management of MR. PHELPS.

Monday, January 10th, 1853, and During the Week,

WILL BE PRESENTED THE HISTORICAL PLAY OF

KING HENRY V.,

FROM THE TEXT OF SHAKESPEARE.

The Overture and Incidental Music composed and selected by MR. W. H. MONTGOMERY. New Scenery by MR. F. FENTON. Decorations by MR. HARVEY. The Costumes by MR. COOMBS and MISS BAILEY. The Machinery by MR. CAWDERY and Assistants.

Chorus (in the character of "Time")	...	...	MR. H. MARSTON
King Henry V.	...	...	MR. PHELPS
Humphrey, Duke of Glo'ster	} Brothers to the King	{	MISS MANDLEBERT
John, Duke of Bedford			MR. MORTON
Thomas Beaufort, Duke of Exeter (Uncle to the King)	...	...	MR. H. MELLON
Duke of York (Cousin to the King)	...	...	MR. EDWARDS
Chicheley, Archbishop of Canterbury	...	...	MR. WILKINS
Earl of Salisbury	...	MR. WALLIS	Earl of Westmoreland ... MR. BELFORD
Earl of Warwick	...	MR. BUTLER	Earl of Huntingdon ... MR. JOSEPHS
Earl of Suffolk	...	...	MR. LUCE
Earl of Cambridge	} Conspirators against the King	{	MR. MEAGRESON
Sir Thomas Grey			MR. C. MORTIMER
Lord Willoughby	...	MR. JONES	Lord Fanhope ... MR. SHARPE
Nobles	...	MESSRS. MORRIS, FROST, LYONS, HANDS, LLOYD, WILSON, PIERCE, DAWSON, STEPHENS, and GREEN	
Heralds	...	...	MESSRS. HENRY, EMERY, GOUGH, and LEWIS
Sir Thomas Erpingham	} Officers in the King's Army	{	MR. LACY
Captain Fluellen			MR. LEWIS BALL
Captain Gower			MR. WILLIS
Williams (a Soldier in the same)	...	...	MR. BARRETT
Nym	} formerly Servants to Falstaff, now Soldiers in the same	{	MR. C. FENTON
Bardolph			MR. WILLIAMS
Pistol			MR. G. BENNETT
Boy (Servant to them)	...	...	MISS E. TRAVERS
Hostess Quickly (Pistol's Wife)	...	...	MRS. H. MARSTON
Charles VI. King of France	...	...	MR. G. BASSIL
Lewis, the Dauphin	...	...	MR. F. ROBINSON
Duke of Burgundy	...	...	MR. CLINTON
Charles d'Albret (High Constable)	...	...	MR. T. C. HARRIS
Lord Bonciqualt	...	MR. CLARK	Count Grandpré ... MR. HASWELL
Governor of Harfleur	...	MR. FRANKS	Archbishop of Bourges ... MR. DALE
Nobles	...	MESSRS. DUBOIS, CLARKE, BIRD, DAVIS, JONES, BURNETT, MORGAN, LUCE, &c.	
Heralds	...	...	MESSRS. MORTIMER, MORGAN, SIMONDS, JOHNSON, &c.
Isabel, Queen of France	...	...	MRS. BARRETT
Katharine (Daughter of Charles and Isabel)	...	...	MISS T. BASSANO
Ladies (attendant on the Queen and Princess)	MESDAMES S. WARDE, ROSE, LAMBE, PEVENSEY, DIXON, F. YOUNGE, BAILEY, REED, MATTHEWS, &c.		

The Scene at the beginning of the Play is in England, but afterwards wholly in France.

THEATRE ROYAL,
SADLER'S WELLS.

LESSEES—MESSRS. GREENWOOD AND PHELPS.

Under the Management of Mr. PHELPS.

Last night of performing before Easter.

FOR THE BENEFIT OF MR. PHELPS,

On Thursday, March 17th, 1853,

WILL BE PRODUCED (FOR THE FIRST TIME AT THIS THEATRE) THE SECOND
PART OF SHAKESPEARE'S PLAY OF

HENRY IV.

Henry IV.	...	...	...	...	...	Mr. PHELPS
(Selected by Her Majesty for his Performance at Windsor Castle)						
Justice Shallow	...	(on this occasion) also by				Mr. PHELPS
Henry, Prince of Wales, afterwards Henry V.	...	...	...	...	...	Mr. F. ROBINSON
Prince John of Lancaster	...	...	...	...	...	Mr. CLINTON
Prince Humphrey	...	...	...	...	...	MISS MANDLEBERT
Duke of Clarence	...	...	...	...	...	MISS F. YOUNGE
Archbishop of York	...	...	...	...	...	Mr. H. MELLON
Lord Chief Justice	...	...	...	...	...	Mr. ROBINS
Earl of Westmoreland	...	...	...	...	...	Mr. T. C. HARRIS
Lord Mowbray	...	...	...	...	...	Mr. G. BASSIL
Lord Hastings	...	Mr. C. MORTIMER	Justice Silence	...	Mr. C. FENTON	
Sir John Falstaff	...	...	...	...	...	Mr. BARRETT
Bardolph	...	Mr. WILLIAMS	Pistol	...	Mr. WILKINS	
Davy	...	Mr. LEWIS BALL	Mouldy	...	Mr. FRANKS	
Wart	...	Mr. MEAGRESON	Feeble	...	Mr. LACY	
Shadow	...	Mr. BATEMAN	Poins	...	Mr. BELFORD	
Page to Falstaff	...	MISS K. MANDLEBERT	Gower	...	Mr. GOULD	
Mrs. Quickly	...	...	...	...	...	MRS. H. MARSTON
Doll Tearsheet	...	...	...	...	...	MRS. DIXON

To conclude with KENNY'S Farce of

RAISING THE WIND.

Mr. Plainway	...	Mr. WILLIAMS	Mr. Fainwould	...	Mr. C. FENTON
Sam	...	...	...	...	Mr. LEWIS BALL
Jeremy Diddler	...	(for this night only)			Mr. PHELPS
Richard	...	Mr. FRANKS	John	...	Mr. MEAGRESON
Waiter	...	...	...	...	Mr. C. MORTIMER
Peggy Plainway	...	...	...	...	MISS BASSANO
Laurelia Durable	...	...	...	...	MRS. H. MARSTON

THEATRE ROYAL,
SADLER'S WELLS.

LESSEES—MESSRS. GREENWOOD AND PHELPS.

Under the Management of MR. PHELPS.

FOR THE BENEFIT OF MR. PHELPS,

On Wednesday, March 14th, 1855,

WILL BE PRESENTED SHAKESPEARE'S HISTORICAL PLAY OF

HENRY VIII.

King Henry VIII.	...	...	...	...	...	MR. BARRETT
Cardinal Wolsey	...	...	...	...	...	MR. PHELPS
Buckingham	...	...	...	...	...	MR. HOSKINS
Cromwell	...	...	...	...	...	MR. F. ROBINSON
Lord Sands	...	...	...	...	...	MR. LEWIS BALL
Earl of Surrey	...	MR. PERFITT	Duke of Norfolk	...	...	MR. T. C. HARRIS
Duke of Suffolk	...	MR. BELFORD	Cardinal Campeius	...	...	MR. J. W. RAY
Sir Henry Guildford	...	...	...	...	...	MR. C. FENTON
Lord Chamberlain	...	MR. JOSEPHS	Sir William Lovell	...	...	MR. LACY
Sir William Brandon	...	MR. C. MORTIMER	Surveyor	...	...	MR. LUNT
Gardiner	...	MR. MEAGRESON	Clerk	...	...	MR. FRANKS
Queen Katharine	...	...	...	...	...	MISS ATKINSON
Lady Denny	...	...	...	...	...	MRS. H. MARSTON
Anne Bullen	...	...	...	...	...	MISS COOPER

POLKA "Bo-Peep" *Montgomery.*

To conclude with the Musical Play of

ROB ROY.

Rob Roy Macgregor Campbell	...	...	...	...	MR. HOSKINS
Bailie Nicol Jarvie	...	(for this night only)	...	...	MR. PHELPS
Helen Macgregor	...	...	...	...	MISS ATKINSON

THEATRE ROYAL, SADLER'S WELLS.

LESSEES—MESSRS. GREENWOOD AND PHELPS.

Under the Management of MR. PHELPS.

This Bill is Copyright, and Entered at Stationers' Hall.

Monday, November 20th, 1854, and During the Week,

WILL BE PRESENTED SHAKESPEARE'S PLAY OF

PERICLES, PRINCE OF TYRE.

Adapted and Arranged for Representation by MR. PHELPS.

The Scenery by MR. F. FENTON. The Costumes by MISS BAILEY. The
Properties by MR. HARVEY. The Music composed by MR. W. H.
MONTGOMERY. The Dances arranged by MR. F. FRAMPTON.

ACT I.—THE PALACE OF ANTIOCHUS.

Antiochus (King of Antioch) ...	MR. T. C. HARRIS	Thaliard ...	MR. BELFORD
Pericles (Prince of Tyre) ...	... ..	... ..	MR. PHELPS
The Daughter of Antiochus ...	... ..	... ..	MISS PARKER
Attendants on the Princess ...	MISSSES WILKINS, STEPHENS, NATHAN, WARDE, LAMBE, MACARTHY		

TYRE—INTERIOR OF THE PALACE.

Helicanus and Escanes (Two Lords of Tyre) ...	MR. BARRETT and MR. PARSONS		
First Lord ...	MR. EVANS	Second Lord ...	MR. LACY
Other Attendant Lords ...	MESSRS. FROST, MASTERS, SCOLEY, BLAND, HODGES, JACKSON		

THARSUS.

Cleon (Governor of Tharsus) ...	... ..	... ..	MR. H. MARSTON
Dionyza (Wife to Cleon) ...	... ..	... ..	MISS ATKINSON
Citizens of Tharsus ...	MESSRS. JOHNSON, NAYSMITH, DUDLEY, WILSON, WILLIAMS, THOMAS		

ACT II.—PENTAPOLIS—THE SEA-SHORE.

First Fisherman ...	MR. JOSEPHS	Second Fisherman ...	MR. L. BALL
Third Fisherman ...	... ..	... ..	MR. CHARLES

CORRIDOR IN THE PALACE OF SIMONIDES.

Simonides (King of Pentapolis) ...	... ..	... ..	MR. LUNT
First Lord ...	MR. FRANKS	First Knight ...	MR. THOMPSON
Thaisa (Daughter to Simonides) ...	... ..	... ..	MISS COOPER

A HALL OF STATE.

Grecian Knights ...	MISSSES LACY, TURNOUR, GOSLING, WILTSHIRE, ARSOTTI, SMALL, ANGELIQUE, E. WESTBROOKE, P. WESTBROOKE, ALLEN, M. ALLEN, FENTON		
Ladies of the Court of Pentapolis ...	MISSSES WENDON, MARSH, HARRISON, GOUGH, ENNIS, FRANCIS, FARLEY, FORD, FLETCHER, M'EWIN, ROBINS-ON, BRAITHWAITE, VERNON		

ACT III.—A SHIP AT SEA.

First Sailor ...	MR. STANLEY	Second Sailor ...	MR. WESTON
Lychorida ...	...	...	MRS. H. MARSTON

EPHESUS—A ROOM IN CERIMON'S HOUSE.

Cerimon ...	MR. J. W. RAY	Philemon ...	MR. C. MORTIMER
First Gentleman of Ephesus ...	...	...	MR. PERFITT
Second Gentleman of Ephesus ...	...	...	MR. WHITE

An Interval of fifteen years is supposed to occur between Acts III. and IV.

ACT IV.—THIARSUS—AN OPEN PLACE NEAR THE SEA-SHORE.

Leonine ...	...	...	MR. MEAGRESON
First Pirate	MR. ROBSON	Second Pirate	MR. WILLIS
Marina (Daughter to Pericles and Thaisa) ...	...	...	MISS E. HERAUD
Third Pirate	MR. GIBSON		

MITYLENE.

Boult ...	...	...	MR. HOSKINS
Lysimachus (Governor of Mitylene) ...	...	...	MR. F. ROBINSON
An Old Woman of Mitylene ...	...	...	MR. C. FENTON

ACT V.—ON BOARD PERICLES' SHIP, OFF MITYLENE.

Diana (in a Vision) ...	...	...	MISS T. BASSANO
First Tyrian Sailor ...	MR. MORLEY	Second Tyrian Sailor ...	MR. SMYTHSON

Dioramic View of the Passage from Mitylene to Ephesus.

THE TEMPLE OF DIANA AT EPHESUS.

Priestesses of Diana ...	MISSER BERTRAM, WARD, ROSE, TOMLINSON, SMYTHERS,
	COPPING, GILBERT, GOWER, WATSON, GORDON, JESSAP
Inhabitants of Ephesus ...	MESSRS. GREEN, WILLIDGE, HANDS, BUCK, GIBBON,
	CRENNAN, HARDWELL, EVAIN, HARDING, JACKSON

SCHOTTISCHE ...	...	"The Lamplighter" ...	...	Montgomery.
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Published by D'ALMAINE AND Co., 20, Soho Square.

To conclude with the favourite After-Piece entitled

THE CONQUERING GAME.

THEATRE ROYAL,
DRURY LANE.

LESSEE AND MANAGER—MR. JAMES ANDERSON.

The Performance will commence at 7 precisely. Doors open at 6.30.

MR. MACREADY'S BENEFIT,

On which occasion he will perform for the LAST TIME,
(IN SHAKESPEARE'S TRAGEDY OF MACBETH) AND TAKE HIS
FAREWELL OF THE STAGE.

This Evening, Wednesday, February 26th, 1851,

WILL BE ACTED SHAKESPEARE'S TRAGEDY OF

MACBETH.

Duncan, King of Scotland	...	...	...	...	Mr. J. W. RAY
Malcolm	} his Sons	...	...	...	{ Mr. H. T. CRAVEN
Donalbain		...	...	...	
Macbeth	} Generals in the King's Army	...	...	...	{ Mr. MACREADY
Banquo		...	...	...	
Macduff		...	...	...	
Lenox	} Noblemen of Scotland	...	...	...	{ Mr. PHELPS
Rosse		...	...	...	
Fleance (Son to Banquo)		...	...	...	
Siward, Earl of Northumberland	...	...	...	...	MASTER SALMON
Seyton (an Officer)	...	...	...	...	Mr. M. M. SIMPSON
Officers	...	...	...	...	Doctor ... Mr. BISSON
Lady Macbeth	...	...	...	...	MESSRS. A. BRINDAL, COE, HARRIS, HENRY, and SIMPSON
Gentlewoman	...	...	...	...	Mrs. WARNER
The Three Witches	...	...	...	...	MRS. BARRETT
Hecate	...	...	...	...	MESSRS. EMERY, J. BLAND, and BARRETT
	...	...	...	...	MISS P. HORTON

MR. MACREADY embraces this opportunity of tendering his thanks to
MR. PHELPS AND MRS. WARNER
For the offer of their valuable services.

The Evening's Entertainments will conclude with the Operetta, in
One Act, entitled

THE CADI'S DAUGHTER.

THEATRE ROYAL, SADLER'S WELLS.

LESSEES—MESSRS. GREENWOOD AND PHELPS.

Under the Management of MR. PHELPS.

FOR THE BENEFIT OF MR. PHELPS,

On Thursday, February 27th, 1851,

WILL BE PRESENTED SHAKESPEARE'S TRAGEDY OF

KING JOHN.

King John	MR. PHELPS
Prince Henry, his Son (afterwards King Henry III.) ...	MASTER RIGHTON
Arthur, Duke of Bretagne { Son of Geoffrey, late Duke of Bretagne, } Bretagne { the elder Brother of King John }	MISS MANDLEBERT
Geoffrey Fitz-Peter, Earl of Essex (Chief Justiciary of England) ...	MR. C. STILT
William Mareshall, Earl of Pembroke	MR. C. FENTON
Robert Bigot, Earl of Norfolk	MR. MARDYN
William Longsword, Earl of Salisbury	MR. GRAHAM
Hubert de Burgh (Chamberlain to the King)	MR. GEORGE BENNETT
William Plantagenet, Earl of Warrenne	MR. FROST
William, Earl of Arundel	MR. EDWARDS
Robert, Baron Fitz-Walter ... MR. LAWRENCE	Vere, Earl of Oxford ... MR. LUCE
Robert de Ross ... MR. MARCHANT	Richard de Percy ... MR. SMYTHSON
Gilbert de Clare ... MR. THOMAS	Sheriff of Northampton ... MR. SCOLEY
Knights ... MR. HENRIES, &c.	English Herald ... MR. WILKINS
Robert Faulconbridge (Son of Sir Robert Faulconbridge) ...	MR. WILLIAMS
Philip Faulconbridge { his half-brother, bastard Son to } King Richard I. }	MR. HENRY MARSTON
James Gurney (Servant to Lady Faulconbridge)	MR. FRANKS
Peter of Pomfret (a Prophet)	MR. EDWARDS
Philip Augustus, King of France	MR. HOSKINS
Lewis, the Dauphin	MR. WALLER
Archduke of Austria	MR. KNIGHT
Giles, Viscount de Melun	MR. C. WHEATLEIGH
Chatelain d'Arras ... MR. WILSON	Thibaud, Count de Blois ... MR. JOSEPHS
Eustache de Neuville ... MR. SEYMOUR	Chatelain de St. Omer ... MR. JOHNSON
Baldwin de Bretel ... MR. PHILIPS	Bartholomew de Roze ... MR. BROWN
Ralph de Beaumont ... MR. THOMPSON	French Herald ... MR. MEAGRESON
Chatillon, Count de Nevres (Ambassador from France to King John)	MR. H. MELLON
Cardinal Pandulph, the Pope's Legate	MR. A. YOUNGE
Citizen of Angiers	MR. F. YOUNGE
The Lady Constance (Mother to Arthur)	MISS GLYN
Queen Elinor (Widow of King Henry II., and Mother of King John)	MRS. ARCHBOLD
Blanche { Daughter to Alphonso, King of Castile, and } Niece to King John }	MISS S. LYONS
Lady Faulconbridge { Mother to the Bastard, and to Robert } Faulconbridge }	MRS. GRAHAM

To conclude with the popular Faree of

TURNING THE TABLES.

Old Knibbs	MR. WILLIAMS
Jack Humphries	MR. YOUNGE
Edgar de Courey ... MR. C. WHEATLEIGH	Tom Thornton ... MR. GRAHAM
Jeremiah Bumps ... (for this night only) ...	MR. PHELPS
Miss Sally Knibbs ... MISS LUCY RAFTER	Mrs. Humphries ... MRS. GRAHAM
Patty Larkins	MISS ELIZA TRAVERS

In Remembrance
OF THE
LATE MR. DOUGLAS JERROLD.

COMMITTEE.

JOHN BLACKWOOD, ESQ.	JOHN LEECH, ESQ.	SIR JOSEPH PAXTON, M.P.
SHIRLEY BROOKS, ESQ.	MARK LEMON, ESQ.	SAMUEL PHELPS, ESQ.
JOHN B. BUCKSTONE, ESQ.	EDWARD LLOYD, ESQ.	WILLIAM H. RUSSELL, ESQ.
WILKIE COLLINS, ESQ.	CHARLES MACKAY, ESQ.	ALBERT SMITH, ESQ.
PETER CUNNINGHAM, ESQ.	DANIEL MACLISE, ESQ.,	CLARKSON STANFIELD, ESQ.
JOHN C. DEANE, ESQ.	R.A.	R.A.
CHARLES DICKENS, ESQ.	SIR EDWARD BULWER	WILLIAM M. THACKERAY,
HEPWORTH DIXON, ESQ.	LYTTON, BART., M.P.	ESQ.
JOHN FORSTER, ESQ.	WILLIAM C. MACREADY,	BENJAMIN WEBSTER, ESQ.
CHARLES KNIGHT, ESQ.	ESQ.	W. HENRY WILLS, ESQ.

Honorary Secretary—ARTHUR SMITH, ESQ.

OFFICE AT THE GALLERY OF ILLUSTRATION,
REGENT STREET, WATERLOO PLACE,

HANDSOMELY PLACED AT THE DISPOSAL OF THE COMMITTEE BY MR. WILLERT BEALE.

On Wednesday Evening, July 15th, 1857,

WILL BE REPRESENTED, AT THE

THEATRE ROYAL, HAYMARKET,

THE LATE MR. DOUGLAS JERROLD'S COMEDY, IN THREE ACTS,

THE HOUSEKEEPER

(First produced at the HAYMARKET THEATRE in the summer of 1833).

Sidney Maynard ... Mr. HOWE	Tom Purple ... Mr. W. FARREN
Father Oliver ... (as originally performed by him) ...	Mr. B. WEBSTER
Simon Box ... (as originally performed by him) ...	Mr. BUCKSTONE
Daguerre ... Mr. BRAID	Lavalle ... Mr. L. WALTER
Bin ... Mr. CLARK	Benjamin ... Mr. ROGERS
Christopher Layer ... Mr. E. VILLIERS	Felicia ... Miss REYNOLDS
Widow Duckling ... Mrs. POYNTER	Sophy Hawes ... Miss M. WILTON

After *The Housekeeper* an Occasional Address will be spoken by

MR. PHELPS.

AFTER WHICH THE LATE MR. DOUGLAS JERROLD'S DRAMA,

THE PRISONER OF WAR.

Captain Channel, R.N. ... (as originally performed by him) ...	Mr. PHELPS
Lieut. B. Firebrace, R.N. ... Mr. HOWE	Tom Heyday ... Mr. W. FARREN
Beaver ... Mr. E. VILLIERS	Boaz ... Mr. ROGERS
Peter Pall Mall ... (as originally performed by him) ...	Mr. KEELEY
Chenille ... Mr. BRAID	Forest ... Mr. COE
Monsr. La Rose ... Mr. CLARK	Gaoler ... Mr. EDWARDS
Garçon ... MASTER D. CARROLL	Captain of Guard ...
Clarina Channel ... Miss M. OLIVER	Mad. La Rose ... Mrs. POYNTER
Polly Pall Mall ... (as originally performed by her) ...	Mrs. KEELEY
Mad. La Violette ... Mrs. GRIFFITHS	Babette ... Miss LAVINE

To conclude with a BALLET DIVERTISSEMENT,

In which MISS FANNY WRIGHT, MR. MACKAY, MR. W. DRIVER, and the
CORPS DE BALLET will appear.

SOLE LESSEE—MR. PHELPS.

Under the Management of MR. PHELPS.

First appearance of MR. EDMUND PHELPS.

Wednesday, November 21st, 1860, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday,
22nd, 23rd, and 24th,

THE PERFORMANCES WILL COMMENCE WITH LORD BYRON'S TRAGEDY OF

WERNER.

Werner	...	...	...	...	...	...	Mr. PHELPS
Ulric (his Son)	...	...	...	...	...	...	MR. EDMUND PHELPS (His first appearance in London)
Gabor	...	...	...	...	...	...	Mr. H. MARSTON
Ildenstein	...	...	...	...	...	...	Mr. BARRETT
Baron Stralenheim	...	Mr. T. C. HARRIS	Fritz	...	Mr. C. SEYTON		
Rodolph	...	MR. MEAGRESON	Henrick	...	MR. CHAPMAN		
Arnheim	...	MR. LICKFOLD	Eric	...	MR. WEBSTER VERNON		
Meister	...	MR. GATES	Ludwig	...	MR. HENRY		
Josephine	...	...	...	...	MISS ATKINSON		
Ida Stralenheim	...	...	...	...	MISS FANNY JOSEPHS		

Scene—Partly on the Frontier of Silesia, and partly in Siegendorf Castle,
near Prague. Time—The Close of the Thirty Years' War.

TO CONCLUDE WITH SHAKESPEARE'S COMEDY OF

KATHARINE AND PETRUCHIO.

Petruchio (a Gentleman of Verona, a Suitor to Katharine)	MR. H. MARSTON
Baptista (a rich Gentleman of Padua)	MR. T. C. HARRIS
Biondello	MR. C. FENTON
Hortensio (Suitor to Bianca)	MR. WEBSTER VERNON
Musie Master	MR. MEAGRESON
Grumio (Servant to Petruchio)	MR. LEWIS BALL
Pedro ... MR. CHAPMAN Tailor ... MR. JOSEPHS	Nathaniel ... MR. PIDGEON
Gregory ... MR. HENRY Cook ... MR. LICKFOLD	Walter ... MR. LUCE
Adam ... MR. FROST Gabriel ... MR. SCOLEY	Ralph ... MR. GORDON
Katharine, the Shrew } Daughters to Baptista {	MRS. CHARLES YOUNG
Bianca, her Sister }	MISS CAROLINE PARKES
Curtis (Servant to Petruchio)	MRS. G. HODSON

Scene—Sometimes in Padua, and sometimes in Petruchio's House in the Country.

On Monday, November 26th, Macklin's Comedy of

THE MAN OF THE WORLD.

Sir Pertinax Macsycophant MR. PHELPS

HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE.

FESTIVAL PERFORMANCES IN HONOUR OF THE NUPTIALS OF

H.R.H. The Princess Royal, with H.R.H. The Prince Frederick
William of Prussia.

Tuesday Evening, 19th January. Thursday Evening, 21st January.
Saturday Evening, 23rd January. Friday Evening, 29th January.

FIRST REPRESENTATION,

Tuesday Evening, 19th January, 1858,

COMMENCING AT HALF-PAST SEVEN, WITH SHAKESPEARE'S TRAGEDY OF

MACBETH

(Preceded by SPOHR'S OVERTURE TO MACBETH),

WITH LOCKE'S INCIDENTAL MUSIC.

The Scenery arranged by MR. CHARLES MARSHALL.

Duncan (King of Scotland)	...	...	...	MR. T. C. HARRIS
Malcolm	} Sons to the King	...	...	{ MR. F. ROBINSON
Donalbain		...	...	
Macbeth	} Generals of the King's Army	...	...	{ MR. PHELPS
Banquo		...	...	
Macduff	} Noblemen of Scotland	...	...	{ MR. A. RAYNER
Lenox		...	...	{ MR. HOWE
Rosse		...	...	{ MR. SEYTON
Fleance (Son to Banquo)		...	...	{ MR. BELFORD
Seward (General of the English Forces)	...	...	...	MISS WILLIAMS
Seyton	MR. C. FENTON	...	...	MR. MEAGRSON
First Officer	MR. LEE	...	...	A Physician ... MR. RANOE
Lady Macbeth	MISS HELEN FAUCIT	...	...	Second Officer ... MR. LICKFOLD
The Three Witches	...	...	...	Gentlewoman ... MISS RAWLINGS
Hecate	...	...	...	MESSRS. EMERY, RAY, and LEWIS BALL
Singing Witches	MADAME WEISS, MDLLE. SEDLATZEK, MR. MONTM	...	...	MR. WEISS
	SMITH, MR. WINN, and MR. BARTLEMAN	...	...	

At the end of the Play, THE NATIONAL ANTHEM, by MME. WEISS, MDLLE.
SEDLATZEK, MR. WEISS, MR. M. SMITH, MR. WINN, and MR. BARTLEMAN,
assisted by M. BENEDICT'S Vocal Association of 300 Voices.

Conductor of the Music M. BENEDICT

To conclude with MR. OXENFORD'S Farce of

TWICE KILLED.

Mr. Enclid Facile ... MR. KEELEY Mr. Ralph Reckless ... MR. KINLOCH
Tom (his Servant) MR. CLARK
Mr. Holdfast ... MR. TILBURY Mr. Fergus Fable ... MR. W. TEMPLETON
Robert ... MR. GLINDON Mrs. Facile ... MRS. LEIGH MURRAY
Miss Julia Flighty ... MISS OLIVER Fanny Pepper ... MRS. KEELEY

Each Performance to commence punctually at 7.30. Doors will be open at 6.30.

ROYAL ENTERTAINMENT.

By Command.

Her Majesty's Servants will perform, at WINDSOR CASTLE,

On Wednesday, 30th November, 1859,

SHAKESPEARE'S TRAGEDY OF

ROMEO AND JULIET.

Esealus (Prince of Verona)	...	...	...	...	MR. HAYWELL
Paris (a Young Nobleman, Kinsman to the Prince)					MR. SEYTON
Montague	} Heads of Two Houses, at variance with each other				MR. MEAGRESON
Capulet					MR. J. W. RAY
Romeo (Son to Montague)	...	...	...	...	MR. F. ROBINSON
Mercutio (Kinsman to the Prince, and Friend to Romeo)					MR. PHELPS
Benvolio (Nephew to Montague, and Friend to Romeo)					MR. BELFORD
Tybalt (Nephew to Lady Capulet)	...	...	...	...	MR. T. C. HARRIS
Friar Laurence (a Franciscan)	...	...	...	...	MR. H. MARSTON
Friar John (of the same Order)	...	...	...	...	MR. CHAPMAN
Peter	...	...	...	...	MR. LEWIS BALL
Sampson	} Servants to Capulet				MR. C. FENTON
Gregory		...	...	...	MR. GATES
Abram (Servant to Montague)	...	...	...	...	MR. LICKFOLD
Balthazar (Servant to Romeo)	...	...	...	...	MR. WARD
An Apothecary	...	...	...	...	MR. WILLIAMS
Page to Paris	...	...	...	...	MISS C. HILL
Lady Capulet (Wife to Capulet)	...	...	...	...	MRS. SAVILLE
Lady Montague (Wife to Montague)	...	...	...	...	MRS. HODSON
Juliet (Daughter to Capulet)	...	...	...	...	MISS HEATH
Nurse to Juliet	...	...	...	...	MRS. H. MARSTON

Scene, during the greater part of the Play, in Verona; once, in the Fifth Act, at Mantua.

Under the Management of MR. GEORGE ELLIS
and

Under the Direction of MR. W. B. DONNE,

Her Majesty's Examiner of Plays.

The Theatre arranged and the Scenery painted by

MR. THOMAS GRIEVE.

ROYAL ENTERTAINMENT.

By Command.

Her Majesty's Servants will perform, at WINDSOR CASTLE,

On Thursday, 24th January, 1861,

A PLAY, IN FIVE ACTS, BY SIR EDWARD BULWER LYTTON, ENTITLED

RICHIELIEU;

OR,

THE CONSPIRACY.

Louis the Thirteenth	...	...	...	...	...	MR. T. C. HARRIS
Gaston, Duke of Orleans (His Brother)	...	...	...	...	...	MR. W. VERNON
Baradas	{	Favourite of the King—First Gentle-			}	MR. H. MARSTON
		man of the Chamber				
Cardinal Richelieu	...	...	...	...	...	MR. PHELPS
The Chevalier de Mauprat	...	...	...	...	...	MR. HERMANN VEZIN
The Sieur de Beringhen	{	in attendance on the King—one of			}	MR. J. G. SHORE
		the Conspirators				
Joseph (a Capuchin—Richelieu's Confidant)	...	...	...	...	...	MR. BARRETT
Huguet	{	an Officer of Richelieu's Household			}	MR. MEAGRESON
		Guard—a Spy				
François (First Page to Richelieu)	...	...	...	...	...	MR. SEYTON
De Claremont (a Courtier)	...	...	...	...	...	MR. C. FENTON
Governor of the Bastile	...	...	...	...	...	MR. LICKFOLD
Captain of the Archers	...	...	...	...	...	MR. JOSEPHS
First Secretary	...	...	...	...	...	MR. CHAPMAN
Second Secretary	...	...	...	...	...	MR. GATES
Third Secretary	...	...	...	...	...	MR. HENRY
Page	...	...	...	...	...	MISS E. JOSEPHS
Julie de Mortemar (an Orphan—Ward to Richelieu)	...	...	...	...	...	MISS HEATH
Marion de Lorme (in Richelieu's pay)	...	...	...	...	...	MISS F. JOSEPHS

Under the Direction of	...	...	...	...	MR. W. BODHAM DONNE
Stage Manager	...	...	...	...	MR. GEORGE ELLIS

The Theatre arranged and the Scenery painted by
MR. THOMAS GRIEVE.

The following lines, copied from a North London paper of 1856, may appropriately close the story of Mr. Phelps's labours at Sadler's Wells:—

To SAMUEL PHELPS.

Unrivalled Phelps, who art by genius blest,
Of all our Shakespeare's students, truest, best,
Bequeathed to thee the tragic robe, for ne'er
Was one more worthy found, its folds to wear;
Thy youthful mind by Shakespeare's soul inspired
To emulate his majesty aspired;
'Twas Avon's bard endowed thee with the power
Which so enchants thy nation at this hour.—
Sage PROSPERO! come forth, in thee we find
All which in marvel can absorb the mind.
Good HAMLET! hearing woes thou dost bemoan,
Enrapt in thine, we thus forget our own.
With POSTHUMUS we angered are, till grief
Chastises him for his insane belief.
Valiant MERCUTIO, vainly we deplore
The fray through which we ne'er behold thee more.
Blithe BULLY BOTTOM, fair Titania's pride,
Thy wit beneath thy mask thou canst not hide.
Great is our love for gentle PERICLES—
Martyr to fate and fame's uncertainties.
The injured TIMON gains our sympathy,
Proving how false and hollow friends may be.
Jealous OTHELLO, with too willing ear,
Kindles our deep resentment and our fear.
Stern Hebrew SHYLOCK, with thy dread revenge,
We loathe the insults which thou wouldst avenge.
Fearful MACBETH, the Thane, with blood-stained hands,
What thrilling awe thy presence dread commands.
But oh, SIR JOHN!—our trusty FALSTAFF!—Knight!
Do we again behold thee, waggish wight?
Yet, who is this, so grandly, kingly, comes,
Amidst a sound of trumpets and of drums?—
'Tis our FOURTH HENRY; and amidst our tears,
His valiant son soothes his declining years.
Then the FIFTH HARRY gleams upon our sight,
And wins us Agincourt, 'mid triumphs bright.
Now vain MALVOLIO, thinking love to win
By much display of yellow-gartered skin.
The aged, subtle, though ambitious, great,
WOLSEY appears, in high and low estate.

Feeble old SHALLOW, Justice, though unjust,
Thou shalt recall thy youthful freaks, we trust.
BRUTUS, with all his patriot glory crowned,
Acts o'er again the deeds so world-renowned.
Fantastic Spaniard, quaint DON ADRIANO :—
Who shall forget our elegant ARMADO ?
Hush ! list with throbbing heart—and yield a tear
To the most bitter wrongs of hapless LEAR.
Listen to JAQUES, who a sermon brings,
True as a man can preach on men and things.
Yet, more than these appear before our view,
With constant interest and traits ever new—
With art unequalled, and with talent rare,
Our Phelps has ever made each part his care :
No rant, or vile distorted picture gives,
But with such skill, we deem each portrait lives :
True passion's energy, sweet nature's grace—
With soul enrapt, each wondrous truth we trace.
Hail ! mighty Phelps ! we soon may see the time,
When thy great mastery—eloquent, sublime—
Will be acknowledged by the present age,
The brightest star upon our brilliant stage.

CELINE.

CLOSING YEARS OF HIS CAREER.

ON giving up management he had overtures made to him from the managers of several theatres, amongst others from Fechter, who had taken the Lyceum, and he was persuaded into engaging himself to him (for twelve months), to act three nights a week, at a ridiculously low salary. His nephew tried to combat this arrangement; but in this, as on all other previous occasions like it, he was exceedingly stubborn, giving every one credit for behaving towards him as he would have behaved towards them. He was told he would only be fooled, and fooled he certainly was, as his name was underlined for months without his being called on to act once. True, he took his salary, but in his case this was a matter of secondary importance. In the mean time Fechter's purpose was served, and Phelps was kept from appearing as a counter-attraction at some other theatre.

At last being tired of paying him for doing nothing, and hoping to get rid of him thereby, Fechter asked him to play the Ghost in Hamlet; but this was rather too much even for his good nature, and he gave him a pretty sharp reply through his acting manager, and Fechter, in consequence, refused to pay him his salary unless he did what was asked. The matter was at last referred, by mutual consent, to the arbitration of Charles Dickens, who soon gave it in Phelps's favour, and advised Fechter to announce Othello, with Mr. Phelps as the Moor, and himself as Iago, but he did not follow this advice, and the engagement was cancelled.

As soon as his name was taken out of the Lyceum bills he had four offers made him, amongst them one from Falconer and

Chatterton, who were then lessees and managers of Drury Lane. His nephew advised him strongly to enter into arrangements with them; and this time—the second in his life that he ever took the advice of any one—he followed it, and the result proved the correctness of his adviser's views; for he was for seven years the main prop of that establishment. Although he had then been before the London public for very nearly thirty years, he was so popular that he drew, we believe, as many people to that theatre during those seven years as Edmund Kean did the first seven years that he appeared in London.

Early in October, 1863, Lord Byron's *Manfred* was produced under his direction, with immense success, and had a long run. It was well cast, having in it several members of his late Sadler's Wells company, as well as some who had formed a part of Mr. Charles Kean's company at the Princess's.

John Oxenford in the *Times* of 13th October said:—

“The aspect of an audience like that which on Saturday night filled Drury Lane to overflowing can alone impress us with the value of a large theatre as a vehicle for expressing the predilection of the masses. A large theatre scantily attended seems a dismal misappropriation of space, and for ordinary purposes a house of moderate dimensions is sufficient. But within narrow precincts it is impossible to obtain the semblance of a popular demonstration anything approaching the effect of the ample pit, boxes, and gallery of Drury Lane, when packed close with human particles. There could not on Saturday night be a moment's doubt that the announcement of Lord Byron's *Manfred*, with Mr. Phelps in the principal character, had caused a fever of expectation and curiosity among that numerous class, in whose eyes ‘Old Drury’ always has the prestige of nationality. Long before the commencement of the play, not only was every place occupied, but a train of disappointed persons might be seen returning from the doors, unable to find room adapted to the purpose of either sitting or standing. The cause of attraction was twofold. In the first place, *Manfred*, when brought out at Covent Garden in 1834 (nearly twenty years after its publication), created sensation enough to be still remembered by elderly play-goers, who preserved the tradition of its wonders to the rising generation. The other cause of excitement was the appearance of Mr. Phelps. Not only does this gentleman stand high as a member of the theatrical profession, but his exertions in the cause of the legitimate drama at Sadler's Wells have earned for him a veneration which in some persons almost borders on idolatry. In the eyes of that large body of liberal-minded men who distinctly represent the extended education of the present day, and who hail everything like a

revival of the Shakespearean drama as a laudable attempt to cultivate the masses, Mr. Phelps is one of the great benefactors of his age; and probably among the throng of Saturday night were many delegates from the north of London, anxious to honour their local hero on his appearance at a theatre which never wholly ceases to be considered national. We are, indeed, disposed to think that the anxiety to see Mr. Phelps in his new position was even more potent than the curiosity excited by the revival of *Manfred*, for scarcely ever was heard such a burst of applause as arose on Saturday when the curtain was drawn up, and discovered the tragedian alone upon the stage; the acclamations seemed to be all blended into one mighty voice, and that voice to express but one feeling. *Manfred*, though a character of many words and of much reflection, is not a great acting part. The effect which the character is capable of producing depends on sustained declamation, and perhaps the declamation of Mr. Phelps on Saturday could scarcely be surpassed, so true was his reading, so just, while so unobtrusive, was his discrimination of emotions."

Professor Morley, editor of the *Examiner*, says in his *Journal of a London Play-Goer*, under date of the 17th October:—

"There are a few hopeful features in the recent bills of the play. Unmistakable the other evening was the enthusiastic testimony of a crammed house to the satisfaction of the public at seeing Mr. Phelps in his right place upon the boards of Drury Lane. *Manfred* has the best of successes; it brings what it should be the aim of every manager to bring—the educated classes back into the theatre. Mr. Falconer has now, I believe, his fortune in his hands. Mr. Phelps is an actor who does not fail in high endeavour to give poetry its voice upon the stage. Some individualities of manner are felt as defects. Art *absolutely* perfect in any man does not appear once in three centuries. But the play-goer has much to learn, let him be sure of it, who does not feel the distinctive power of a true actor in Mr. Phelps's delivery of Byron's poem. The piece deserves a long run, and its influence as an antidote to some faults in the taste of the day will be all the stronger for its want of effective dramatic action of the ordinary sort. When the town has learnt to sit and hear poetry almost for its own sake, and because it is well interpreted, it will have made a safe step towards the right sense of what it ought to look for in a play. There is plenty of vigorous dramatic action in a wholesome English play-book, but just now it is very desirable to lay the emphasis on words and thoughts. We get plays of action (from the French) worded only with feeble common-place. The action and the actors are the play; printed it usually is unreadable. I do not know whether there was any deliberate design to lay stress on the right point in reviving a dramatic poem that consists little of action, and almost wholly of a poet's thought and fancy."

The same writer says on the 7th November following :—

“It has been proved conclusively that scenery alone will not draw full houses to Drury Lane, yet Manfred crams the pit and fills the theatre. There has seldom been a piece mounted with more lavish and picturesque scenic effect, or with a stronger host of supernumeraries, than Mr. Falconer’s Bonnie Dundee. Nevertheless, Bonnie Dundee could be played only for a few nights to almost empty houses. It is quite true that beautiful and apt scenery, harmonizing with the descriptions and the few incidents of the poem, is necessary to the successful stage appointment of Lord Byron’s Manfred. It is not less true that a play with so little dramatic action, even with all the help of the scenery, and Mr. Phelps in the chief character, would not draw for a week if there were not a high intellectual power in the thoughts and language. Therefore, after all credit has been given to the attractive art of the scene-painter, the complete and unquestionable success of a play rather of poetical thought and language than of action, in a theatre that it takes a very large audience to fill, may be received as evidence that I have not been arguing against the grain of the public, but expressing its right mind in protest against plays of French incident and intrigue, that have no words in them worth a good actor’s speaking, and no characters worth subtle study for their full artistic development. But, we are told, the race of good actors is all but extinct; that there are not half-a-dozen actors equal to those parts in which the language rises above common-place, or where there is demand for anything not to be found in the usual assortment of conventional emotions. I don’t believe it. Good plays and good parts not in the conventional, but in the best and truest sense, would make many good actors. They would have to warm into the unaccustomed work of really expressing freshly-observed niceties and varieties and harmonies of character, and they would not know immediately how to speak a language of which every word has to go forth with its soul in its sound.”

On Easter Monday of 1864 the First Part of Shakespeare’s King Henry IV. was produced, Mr. Phelps playing Falstaff; Mr. Walter Montgomery, Hotspur; Mr. Walter Lacy, the Prince of Wales; Mr. Ryder, the King; and the other characters equally well cast. On this production the editor of the *Examiner* wrote on 14th May :—

“There is a particular enjoyment in the sort of criticism that the players call for, which should go far in aid of many better reasons for the well-being of the stage among a free people. . . . An English audience, with a thoroughly good English play before it, should be one of the worthiest assemblies that the world can show. Again and again I say, let the players believe in their public.

They are not the fast men who have given their success to pieces which have lately had remarkably long runs. There is a great play-going public that includes all, except, perhaps, a still reluctant section of the educated classes, and, of course, the class, every year diminishing, of persons who retain in a religious dread of theatrical performances the tradition of a time when there was honest reason why the theatre should be in ill repute. London is now so populous, and the throng of strangers daily passing through it is so vast, while there is so much recovered good-will to the play-house, that it may take a year to pass through a theatre by the houseful all the people who will wish to see a play said to be good. This is, in fact, rather more success than actors should desire, for to the development of an appreciation of good acting, as much as to the development of good acting itself, it is necessary that each actor should in his time play many parts.

"If it is to become usual for single plays, when attractive, to run for a year in unbroken succession of performances, it will be very difficult for the young actor to acquire or to display his utmost skill, and the public will also be ill trained to that sort of appreciation upon which the maintenance of the best interests of the stage must finally depend. Mr. Phelps wisely varied his *Manfred* with a few performances of *Sir Pertinax Macsycophant*, and has now passed with his art cleverly from that gloomy state of metaphysical abstraction, as a melancholy soul too ready to cast off its body, into the fat flesh of the gross and humorous knight who may owe God a death, but would be loth to pay him before his day. Such contrasts the good actor should take care to set before his audience if he would make them decent critics of his art; and it is only by having opportunity to show the whole range of his powers that an actor can ever hope to prove his right to a first rank among his brethren. If Mr. Phelps played nothing else than *Falstaff*, it would be remarkable. Considered as one part in a singularly varied series, it is unquestionably good. He lays stress not on *Falstaff's* sensuality, but on the lively intellect that stands for soul as well as mind in his gross body, displays his eagerness to parry and thrust, his determination to cap every other man's good saying with something better of his own, which makes him, according to the manner of the actor, thrust in with inarticulate sounds, as if to keep himself a place open for speech while he is fetching up his own flagon of wit from the farthest caverns of his stomach. And the fat knight who so familiarly cracks his jokes with the Prince or upon *Bardolph* is not vulgarized in Mr. Phelps's reading. When the Prince and *Westmoreland* meet *Falstaff* on the road near *Coventry*, and the Prince hails his old comrade with a joke, the change from the gay jesting answer to the courteous salutation, 'My good lord of *Westmoreland*,' is marked by the actor with a smooth delicate touch that stamps the knight distinctly as a man well born and bred."

We are inclined to think he acted one or two other characters besides those already mentioned during this first season ; but Manfred was played for nearly one hundred nights.

The second season commenced on 24th September, 1864, with the First Part of Henry IV. for one week, of which the *Examiner* says :—

“Drury Lane reopened last Saturday, not only with the most creditable programme it was in the manager’s power to produce, but with evidence of added strength in the cast. The First Part of King Henry IV., as it has been performed this week, gains largely by the substitution of Mr. H. Marston for Mr. Ryder in the part of the King. Mr. Ryder declaims very well, but he only declaims ; Mr. Marston puts some of their life into the lines.”

On 1st October the Second Part of Henry IV. was produced, for Mr. Phelps’s performance of the two characters of the King and Justice Shallow ; his son Edmund played the Prince of Wales ; and on this production the *Examiner* says :—

“Of the Second Part of King Henry IV. at Drury Lane, it will suffice to record that Justice Shallow is in Mr. Phelps’s hands, as in Shakespeare’s, anything but a merely comic character. Comic upon the surface, it is at the core terribly earnest, and was meant, with a profound seriousness under the jest, as a picture of grey hairs without honour, age looking back to a false heaven of youthful lusts that in its imbecile youth it had ill realized, instead of forward to the well-earned rest, and downward to the open grave before its feet. There is nothing more sternly earnest in Shakespeare, and more tragic in its undertone, than the dialogue between Shallow and Silence at the beginning of the second scene of the third act, and so Mr. Phelps feels it, as his acting shows. We have in this play the unhonoured age of two old men, Shallow and Falstaff ; with these men on one side of him, and the venerable Chief Justice on the other, Henry V. speaks his closing speech, that begins,—

‘I know thee not, old man : fall to thy prayers ;
How ill white hairs become a fool and jester !’

There is a particular contrast between the unhonoured poverty of wit and soul in the old Shallow, and the premature decay of the King, weighted with mighty care for earthly dignities, that makes the representation of the two characters by one competent actor fully possessed with their significance a source of true artistic pleasure. It is well, also, that the untaught in dramatic art should see how far the skill of a true actor is removed from dull monotony, and through how many differing conceptions it is able faithfully to follow with its impersonation the true poet’s mind.”

On the 8th October Othello was produced, with Phelps as the Moor, Creswick as Iago, Mrs. Vezin and Miss Atkinson as Desdemona and Emilia; and as it has since been said that just then *some* of the wisacres of the Press professed to have found out, after thirty years' experience, that he was *not* a tragic actor, but only a fairly good comic one, we insert here a criticism on *this* performance written by Frederick Guest Tomlins, universally admitted to have been one of the best Shakespearean critics of his time, and which appeared in the *Morning Advertiser*:—

DRURY LANE.

"The fluctuations of public taste seem incomprehensible to those who have not been accustomed to note them. Three years since, in the height of what, for want of a better term, has been called the sensational drama—when headers into real water and the blowing up of a steamer were sufficient to draw the town—it was supposed by the caterers of such theatrical entertainment that the old literary drama of the country had retired from the stage. There were not wanting those who triumphed in the obliteration of what they deemed heavy, incomprehensible, and unnatural stuff; their sympathies and tastes being confined to the violent, the actual, and the frivolous. This opinion had spread even in literary circles, but no sooner are managers found who will take the pains to represent with talent and taste the grand Shakespearean drama, than the largest metropolitan theatre is filled from the stalls to the extremest gallery, with an audience imbued with the most earnest attention, and excited to the deepest interest and most ardent expression by its personation. This was the spectacle displayed at Drury Lane Theatre on Saturday night, when Othello was represented, with a considerable power of acting and careful stage management.

"We have seen every actor of note from Edmund Kean in his earliest time, and we can say with truth that we never saw the grand tragedy pass so swiftly and perfectly before the eyes of the audience. It was like a grand piece of music played flowingly, with all those gradations of effect that fine leading and perfection in the details produce. The entirety of the play was admirably displayed, and it left the effect of a complete and majestic work of art. We do not pretend to say that we have not seen greater actors in the secondary parts, but as the entire performance of a drama, magnificent and perfect in its gigantic proportions, it was completely performed; and it produced a corresponding effect on the varied and numerous audience. The hushed silence as the dreadful catastrophe approaches, and the intense attention of the audience, especially of the women, who with blanched countenances watched the progress of the dreadful passions of the Moor, were remarkable. It bespoke a complete triumph of the literary

and poetic drama, and proved for a thousandth time how the human heart, answering to the calls on its deeper sympathies and emotions, casts aside and forgets all the superficial sensations which lighter works produce.

"The Othello of Mr. Phelps has come to be one of his finest performances; and the taste and judgment of this admirable actor seem to be capable of perpetual polish and refinement. He has now utterly cast aside the stage traditions, and all traces of the manners of his predecessors; and he gives a pure, original, and highly-wrought portrait, entirely from his own study. The last lingering bursts of the great Kean, who invented them; the gurgling spasms wherewith Macready expressed his agonies, are no longer to be traced; nor is there scarcely to be found in the portrayal any filling up of the emotion with conventional tones and mere elocutionary skill. He has moulded the conception in his intellect until it comes pure and perfect from him; and the portrait, a whole-length one, is complete in all its grandeur.

"The colloquial purity of the first part, that is, until the third act, when his destructive passion is awakened, was dignified and, perhaps, a shade too grave, though there is much to be said in defence of this tone on account of the Moorish nature and the quietude which deep and perfect happiness induces. The emphasis was super-excellent, all the pointed lines producing their effect, without the slightest staginess or self-consciousness. There was no roaring sneer when he bid his followers and the rest to 'put up their bright swords lest the dew might rust them;' but it was said naturally, yet most efficiently. So in his speech to the Senate there was no spouting, and we could believe that he was little used to set speechifying. His doting love for his new-made wife was exquisitely marked throughout, and his brimful happiness when he meets her at Cyprus, and the wars are ended, and a long career of married bliss seems opened to him, was expressed with a gentle power that seemed to be the overflowing beneficence of a mighty nature at perfect rest.

"The violent emotion begins in the third act; and when it does begin, which is not till late in the scene, when the terrible suspicion is excited, it rises gradually and naturally with no conscious expression, but with the volcanic and irrepressible power of an irresistible passion overwhelming the usual self-mastery of a great mind. It is with folded arms the deep internal contention is carried on, until the furious rage, indignation, and sorrow burst all bounds, and henceforward 'know no retiring ebb, but keep due on like the Propontic to the Hellespont'—a line, by the way, which we do not recollect hearing.

"Rage, tenderness, indignation, ferocity, fill up the remainder of the play, until despair and remorse darken the picture to its deepest tones, and nothing is left but to throw over the agony the wide, blank shroud of death. If in this arduous delineation Mr. Phelps may have been surpassed in occasional intensity, he has never been surpassed in

purity, feeling, and the sustenance of uniform, passionate expression. He reached the highest point of art when, with his back to the audience, he stood with his head resting on his bosom, gazing on the 'tragie loading of the bed,' a gaunt, fixed figure of despair. The utterance of his breaking heart when his own blind credulity is revealed to him was touching in the extreme, as were his frank avowals of his guilt.

"Those who think this marvellously-drawn character is chiefly contained in certain set speeches, such as the oration to the Senate, and the farewell to the profession, may not join with us in our deep admiration of Mr. Phelps's delineation. We are ready to acknowledge that greater effects have been produced by these hackneyed speeches. But it is the principle of this actor, as of all true artists, not to indulge in mere elocutionary display, but to subdue every part into harmony and proportion. Notwithstanding, we could desire a little more animation in the one and a more despairing passion in the other. The farewell speech is perhaps in itself redundant, and is one of the few instances where the fecundity of the great dramatist's imagination induced him to carry on the images beyond the feeling. He has, however, in every play some such glorious rhapsody, that runs the emotion to an ecstasy almost beyond human power to express. But the noble and artistic rendering of the entire character by Mr. Phelps must not be taken to pieces like a trinket, but must be appreciated and felt as a complete and grand work of art. The appreciation in the theatre was correspondent, and the applause spontaneous and universal, the calls being injudiciously frequent.

"We have left ourselves but little room to speak of the other performers. Mr. Creswick's Iago has many merits and some deficiencies. We heartily thank him for that he did not perpetually give side grimaces to display the craft and cunning of the impersonator of malice. So far that is good. Mr. Creswick has great vigour of action, an admirable presence, and fills the stage, ever making his efficient mark. He commenced in a colloquial manner that induced us to hope we were to have a new and moderated view of the character, with the strong lights thrown in with a master's hand. But conventional notions prevailed, and a continued expression of force marred somewhat the effect. No character has been more variously displayed, and there is none of which more different conceptions are realized by the spectator or reader. We cannot but think that the gigantic malice should be the leading expression, rising as it does to the very sublimity of hatred. Much applause was bestowed on Mr. Creswick's delineation, and he was tumultuously applauded and called for.

"Mrs. Vezin's Desdemona was feminine, elegant, and pleasing, and she looked charmingly. The tragedy required in this part—as now represented, for the best of her scenes is cut out—is not much; but what there is necessitates great and sudden powers of expressing surprise and terror, and throughout an intense and most abiding love.

Miss Atkinson's Emilia is the very perfection of the expression of a dauntless, genuine woman. Her taste and judgment are excellent. The play in other respects might have been cast better. Mr. Marston should have played Cassio, or if not, Mr. Walter Lacy, for there is a robustness of intellect and person in this gentleman that cannot be subdued to the silly gentleman of Venice, Roderigo. The business of the play is well managed and sufficiently illustrated, although there has been no new expenditure on the scenery; an outlay not to be expected, as the play can only be performed for four nights."

On the 15th of October Cymbeline was acted, Phelps being Leonatus Posthumus; Creswick, Iachimo; and Helen Faucit (who had returned to the stage to act with Phelps this season), Imogen.

On the 22nd October Macbeth was acted, for the first time under the management of Falconer and Chatterton, and was played with the following cast four evenings a week until Christmas: Macbeth, Mr. Phelps; Macduff, Mr. Creswick; Lady Macbeth, Miss Helen Faucit (Mrs. Theodore Martin). On the other two evenings, sometimes pieces were produced in which Miss Faucit acted, and on others Macbeth was done with Mr. Creswick as Macbeth, and Miss Atkinson as Lady Macbeth.

Early in 1865 he was playing his two great characters of Wolsey and Richelieu. The *Examiner* of February 25 speaks of them thus:—

"Mr. Phelps has been representing two great Cardinals, Wolsey and Richelieu, and is now acting Richelieu in Sir Bulwer Lytton's play to honestly full houses, which enjoy throughout not only the acting, but the fine dramatic writing also that it worthily illustrates. The skilfully woven plot, the character of Richelieu expressed by touches very various yet all well harmonized, the thoroughly dramatic dialogue that elicits character and is instinct with thought, the language that has in its measured cadence a true music and an unaffected dignity, all this—the genius, in short, of the author—is felt, as it should be, through the actor.

"In Richelieu, how careful is the dramatic painting of a character worth dramatizing well. It has ambition, honesty, dominant love for France. There is delight in the sense of a power that survives and surpasses the old vigour of arm. To the craft of the fox are added touches of love for the orphan girl whom the old statesman guards as a trust from his dead friend of old. There is clear worldly insight, with the flattered and waylaid minister's bitterly low estimate of men; dry humour, genial enjoyment of the gallantry of manhood; a touch

of Richelieu's literary vanity in regard for the young critic who knew where to applaud his play. All this we have in the person of an old man, strong only of wit, now dallying playfully with power over those who come near to his heart, now bitter in pursuit of his own foes and those of France, now defying and now counterfeiting death; a feeble old man, whose life ebbs with his power to serve France, clasping a feebler girl to his heart, and against the lusts of a king rising in her defence, armed with the thunders of the Church; a subtle minister, in the hour of his fall turning defiant upon his triumphant enemies; a dying man into whom strong life flows back as there return into his care the fortunes of his country. In these and all other phases of the character Mr. Phelps, by numberless touches of an art kindred to the poet's genius, gives to Sir Bulwer Lytton's Richelieu life again, and a strong life, upon the English stage.

"Mr. Phelps's Wolsey is remarkable for the impression of busy power subtly given through a marked quietness of demeanour. He moves easily, as a Cardinal familiar with Courts, and meekly, except in the first proud glance at defiant Buckingham, and in the short scene wherein Wolsey, left alone with Cardinal Campeius, lays aside his mask and shows the proud face underneath it. Everywhere, until the scene that shows his fall, Wolsey is the Cardinal in presence of the world. He sits still under the imputations cast on him by Katharine, when she tells the King of the exactions suffered by his subjects. He is as humbly quiet at Blackfriars, and it would be a shrewd critic who could define exactly how by gesture, turn of head, nice management of voice, the proud ambitious spirit makes itself felt in that unobtrusive figure. In the last scenes, showing Wolsey's fall, there is a quiet restlessness of scheming that precedes collapse, and in the fall itself a pathos in the quietness with which the old man stands at bay amid the mocking courtiers; a dignity of pathos in his pointing of the moral of his life at Court. Colley Cibber, if I rightly understand the records, was a Wolsey without ease of movement or of action, and with much display of a proud speech and bearing; the Wolsey of Mr. Phelps is the reverse of this. His movements are perfect in ease, and in the quiet self-possession of a man who always surely steals towards the end he seeks. With help only of a flash or two of haughty spirit, as in the gesture that, when they are alone, denies his fellow-cardinal, Campeius, precedence of exit, it is usually by a visible attempt to veil the inner pride that its intensity is the more strongly shown. Shakespeare has painted it all in his verse—in Wolsey's relentless crushing of defiant Buckingham, in the meek Cardinal who is so hard in council, who is pitilessly watchful of all those who come between him and the King, a luxurious host, a scheming servant of the Pope, but with high aims that give him dignity in the last hour of his disgrace. Shakespeare's Wolsey speaks to us most intelligibly when he comes free from distortion by a violent interpreter."

F. G. Tomlins in the *Morning Advertiser* also wrote as follows on Richelieu :—

DRURY LANE.

“The programme so tastefully and artistically laid out by the manager of this theatre is being rigidly adhered to, and last night Sir Bulwer Lytton’s historical play of Richelieu was brought out in a thoroughly efficient style, Mr. Phelps playing the Cardinal. This is one of the best of this able actor’s characters, and its mixture of high declamation, strong passion, and domestic feeling is calculated to bring out the peculiar talents of that artist in high relief. His heroic bearing, sly sarcasm, human sympathy, inordinate vanity, and extraordinary energy are all admirably portrayed. The quieter parts seem to our mind most to develop the extraordinary powers of the actor, though of course the telling and somewhat stagy points draw down the most vehement applause. As a stage play it is very admirably constructed, whatever the grave historical student may think of it as a delineation of one of the craftiest and most undemonstrative statesmen that ever lived. Fact and fiction, however, seldom agree, and Mr. Phelps’s delineation of the character the literary baronet has chosen to draw is a very fine stage portrait. The enthusiasm shown by the audience was unbounded, and, in addition to a call at the end of the acts, his conclusion was applauded to the very echo that doth applaud again.”

The third season commenced as usual early in the autumn of 1865, and soon after King John was produced, and ran up to Christmas. Cast as follows : King John, Mr. Phelps ; Earl of Salisbury, Mr. Edmund Phelps ; Hubert de Burgh, Mr. Swinbourne ; Philip Faulconbridge, Mr. James Anderson ; Philip, King of France, Mr. A. Rayner ; Lewis the Dauphin, Mr. F. Barsby ; Cardinal Pandulph, Mr. Barrett ; Chatillon, Mr. Charles Harcourt ; an English Herald, Mr. Charles Warner ; a French Herald, Mr. Lickfold ; Elinor, Mother of King John, Mrs. H. Vandenhoff ; Constance, Miss Atkinson ; Blanche, Miss Rose Leclercq ; and Lady Faulconbridge, Mrs. G. Hodson.

Macbeth and other Shakespearean plays, as well as several from the pens of modern authors, were acted after Christmas to the end of the season.

The fourth season, in 1866, again commenced with King John, but with a difference in the cast of two of the principal characters, Mr. Barry Sullivan replacing Mr. Anderson in the character of Faulconbridge, and Mrs. Hermann Vezin Miss Atkinson as

Constance; otherwise the cast was much the same as the year before.

In October, however, the chief revival of this season was the production of an adaptation by Mr. Bayle Bernard of Goethe's great drama of Faust, which was finely mounted and finely cast. Phelps played Mephistopheles; his son Edmund, Faust; Wm. Harrison, the tenor singer, Valentine; Mrs. Hermann Vezin, Margaret; and Mrs. H. Vandenhoff, Martha. On the acting of the principal characters in this piece the *Morning Herald and Standard* said:—

“From the long list of characters, human, semi-human, and super-human, we select as entitled to special mention in the performance the Mephistopheles of Mr. Phelps, the Marguerite of Mrs. Hermann Vezin, the Martha of Mrs. H. Vandenhoff, and the Faust of Mr. Edmund Phelps. The Mephistopheles of Mr. Phelps is an astonishing effort of art, and in all probability the part had not been previously sustained with such a grasp of mental power and physical picturesqueness combined. Every attitude, every look, every word, has been sedulously considered and studied, until nothing could be added from meditation, nothing improved by labour. Mr. Phelps's face is peculiarly adapted to the expression of the stronger passions—his features are unusually mobile, and when he likes to assume it, there is ‘a laughing devil in his sneer’ which is entirely beyond the reach of ordinary actors. His voice, too, is profoundly sepulchral in its tones, so that altogether it was a grand idea of Mr. Chatterton to think of Mephistopheles in conjunction with Mr. Phelps—good for himself, the manager, and good for Mr. Phelps, whose reputation the performance cannot fail greatly to enhance. The favourite part of Marguerite was most charmingly and touchingly played by Mrs. Hermann Vezin, although we must take exception to the petulance of manner displayed in the first meeting with Faust. Marguerite is all gentleness as well as goodness, and could hardly be won even to a show of anger. The placid strain put into Marguerite's mouth by M. Gounod when Faust accosts her, and she replies in those strange words of the English translation,—

‘I'm not a lady,
Nor yet a beauty,’—

shows at all events that we are not singular in our opinion. In all else Mrs. Vezin was admirable, and the scenes in the last two acts were worthy the most accomplished living actress. Mr. Edmund Phelps was seen and heard to special advantage in Faust, which, if it demands no great tragic effort, requires an earnestness of purpose and a high tone of feeling that remove it from the category of common-place characters. Mr. Edmund Phelps's elocution is measured, clear, and

distinct, and his stage movements are extremely agreeable, so that altogether his being cast for Faust was no mistake. Mrs. H. Vandenhoff made a very merry Martha—better, indeed, could not have been desired; and the other parts, comprising a large variety, were efficiently supported. Miss Poole sang the lovely song of Rosa, or Röscher, from Spohr's Faust, sweetly and neatly, and Mr. Wm. Harrison gave the song of Euryanthe with all his pristine vigour."

The *Morning Star* said:—

"Mr. Phelps's Mephistopheles will rank among his finest impersonations. It is wholly a subtle and intellectual impersonation. He has discarded the traditional semi-jocular gentleman, who seemed never quite sure whether he ought to attend upon Faust or play comedy for the benefit of the upper gallery. We would almost say that Mr. Phelps had adopted rather the poetical than the dramatic idea of Mephistopheles; that he seeks to represent the evil shadow of Faust, the half-concealed, insidious *spirit of denial* which is more a part of Faust than an outward tangible demon luring him on to ruin. The warm impulsive Henry of Mr. Edmund Phelps showed in excellent contrast with this subdued callousness, this careful prompting of wickedness. Mrs. Hermann Vezin, in the first place, looked her part, and the innocence and tenderness of the sweet German maiden she bore with her to the end. There was but one flaw in that representation of girlish simplicity—the startling asperity of Margaret's reply to the first greeting of Faust. Goethe talks of *petulance*, but surely Gretchen, uttering these charmingly simple words,—

'Ich bin kein Fraulein, und nicht schön,
Und kann allein zum Hause geh'n,'—

need not have burst up with the affected indignation of a Regent Street milliner's apprentice. The scene in the dungeon was powerfully and strikingly done; and Mrs. Vezin shared the honour with Mr. Phelps and Mr. Edmund Phelps of being more than once called before the curtain to receive the enthusiastic welcome of an unusually crowded house. Mrs. Vandenhoff's Martha was broad and vigorous, and provoked much laughter. The minor characters in the piece were so well filled as to be in keeping with the chief characters—a result that can only be accomplished with a stock of good actors such as are always 'on hand' at Drury Lane."

The *Observer* said (see also pages 314 to 317):—

"Of course in the acting the character of Mephistopheles stands pre-eminent, and this is embodied by Mr. Phelps with the utmost care. His conception of the part is a sound, common-sense one, and he carries it out elaborately. The serious reflections and the mocking suggestions are delivered in a light careless tone that is supernatural in its intense contrast with the thought and the situation, and the

make-up and dress are capital. Mr. Phelps must have studied profoundly to produce so deep an impression as he does with the appearance of so much ease. Not the slightest inflection of meaning is lost. In no part for a long time has this esteemed artist appeared to greater advantage than in Mephistopheles, and his performance was duly appreciated by the audience, who called for him several times in the course of the evening. Mr. Edmund Phelps spoke the words of Faust with well-placed emphasis, and his action was appropriate; but a *little* more fire—and in places tenderness—infused into *certain* portions would improve his personation. The Margaret of Mrs. Hermann Vezin is replete with intelligence; her first reply to Faust was a touch more shrewish than is required; but in the garden scene, where she recounts her home life to her lover, in the agonies of the cathedral scene, and in the wild ravings of the prison scene, she never failed to convey with force the meaning of her author. Mrs. H. Vandenhoff threw much humour into the little part of Martha, and gave great point to the dialogues with Mephistopheles; and Mr. Wm. Harrison, who had a spirited song to sing, played Valentine carefully. Miss Poole has little else to do than to sing, which she did as truly and expressively as always, the 'Twilight Song' by Spohr."

The fifth season commenced as usual in the early autumn of 1867, and the principal productions up to Christmas were Macbeth, and Byron's Marino Faliero under the title of The Doge of Venice; he played the Doge, another very successful and great performance on his part. During the remainder of the season he appeared in a round of his principal characters.

The sixth season commenced at the usual time, and before the end of September, 1868, an adaptation of Sir Walter Scott's novel of *The Fortunes of Nigel*, by Andrew Halliday, was produced under the title of The King o' Scots, in which he appeared in the two characters of King James I. and Trapbois (the miser), and made a great hit in the dual representation. On this production and his performances we extract the following from the *Times*, the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Morning Post*, and the *Daily News* respectively, of the 28th of that month:—

"Mr. Andrew Halliday has executed his task with great skill. Mr. Phelps represents the miser Trapbois, as well as James the King in Mr. Halliday's new play. To this portrait of Avarice, in its most servile aspect, he gives the highest finish. With such a masterly performance as Mr. Phelps's delineation of King James, and such a picture of Old London as Mr. Beverly has created, Mr. Chatterton begins his season with every prospect of success."

"The drama of *The King o' Scots* may be safely trusted to the support of the public. Mr. Halliday, who has undertaken the task of the adapter, is to be accredited with all the praise due to an accomplished writer. The impersonation of James I. may be fairly pronounced among the best of Mr. Phelps's recent assumptions. Old Trapbois the miser, who becomes the hero of the second act, is remarkably effective—the wandering look, the piping voice, and the tottering step thoroughly realized the idea of the doting usurer. To those who demand amplitude of scenic illustrations, Mr. Chatterton has been liberal enough. The opening scene represents Fleet Street before the Great Fire; and the Alsatian revels in Old Whitefriars form a striking scene of animation. The third act opens with another elaborate set, in which old London Bridge is built substantially upon the stage."

"Mr. Phelps has shown, in his delineation of the King, all the features as portrayed by Sir Walter Scott; while those of the miser Trapbois, even at his last gasp, were all conveyed by the same actor in a manner which proved him to be an apt student of human nature. The piece was superbly put on the stage."

"An elaborate spectacular drama, combining the scenic features of the realistic school with a certain amount of legitimate acting, was produced at Drury Lane on Saturday night. Mr. Halliday, the present adapter of *King o' Scots*, has so arranged his version of the novel that Mr. Phelps may double the part of King James with that of Trapbois the usurer; and though it is possible to have too much of a thing, Mr. Phelps is too effective in Scotch and strong character parts ever to tire the audience. Mr. Chatterton has wisely ordered several most picturesque views of the old metropolis from Mr. Beverly; these pictures are painted in Mr. Beverly's best style. Alsatia is a kind of 'thieves' kitchen' of the Middle Ages, in which the Chick-a-leary songs and dances of the period are performed with great spirit."

During the autumn of 1869 Mr. Phelps went into the provinces, and played at different theatres until the spring of the following year, when a disagreement occurred between him and Mr. Chatterton, the lessee and manager, and he left the theatre; for we find by the following notice in the *Morning Advertiser* of the 4th of March, 1870, that he was at Astley's:—

"This house may be said to be inseparably connected with associations of the circus—horses and zebras, elephants, monkeys, and the general entertainments presented in the ring. Even its sensational dramas and pantomimes had a large portion of equine life, and 'hazardous ground and lofty tumbling' imported into them. Mr. E. T. Smith has changed all that, and since the withdrawal of his very

successful pantomime has entered upon a new and more successful career by the engagement of Mr. Phelps and Mr. and Mrs. Hermann Vezin, admirably supported by a well-trained and powerful company, to perform a series of the tragedies and plays with which the names of these eminent artists are associated. Last night Macklin's well-known comedy, *The Man of the World*, was performed for the first time at Astley's. Many years ago, when Mr. Phelps first appeared in the character of Sir Pertinax Macsycophant, he took the public by storm. He was looked upon as a tragedian *great* in *Macbeth*, *Othello*, and similar impersonations; but the force, variety, and finish of his performance of the man who had made his way up in the world by 'booing,' and secured position and wealth by an utter disregard of everything in the way of conscience or honour, was pronounced at the time to be the most perfect study and vigorous delineation of character seen on the stage in modern times. Last night Mr. Phelps amply sustained his high reputation in the part. His complete mastery of the Scotch tongue,—in pronunciation, accent, and inflection,—the real earnestness with which he pursues the great object of his life, the coaxing, cringing manner to his superiors in rank and station, the coarse and overbearing tyranny to those over whom he has control, save when he wants to enlist their assistance in carrying out his schemes, and the fertility of invention displayed when checkmated in some of the schemes, were all *wonderfully* portrayed. The crowded house received him with long-continued plaudits on his entrance in the second act, and the drop-scene fell upon a tempest of applause at the close of the third, in which, with a vividness and power of which words can convey no idea, he describes to his son the means by which he has risen in the world, and proposes himself as an example to be copied. . . . The curtain fell amidst enthusiastic applause, and Mr. Phelps was recalled to receive the unanimous and hearty approval of the delighted audience."

In the autumn, say September, of this year (1870) he was at the Queen's Theatre, Long Acre, and played Bottom the Weaver in a highly eulogized revival of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which had a good run. The *Tempest* was also produced, and several other Shakespearian and other plays, in all of which he appeared.

After this, his next London engagement was at the Princess's, under Mr. F. B. Chatterton's management,—with whom he had evidently again become on friendly terms,—and where he remained for some months, and then went into the provinces, reappearing at Drury Lane in the early autumn of 1871 in another play from the pen of Mr. Andrew Halliday, taken from Scott's *Ivanhoe*, entitled *Rebecca*, in the character of Isaac of York, a part he had played at Preston in another version some forty

years before, as will be seen in the play-bill on page 63. The piece went well, and his performance was a good one; great it could not have been, for there was not enough in it.

After this he again went to the Princess's, and remained there off and on until near the end of 1872. He appeared during this period in several of his best tragic as well as comic assumptions, and also in a new play called *On the Jury*, by his young friend, Watts Phillips (whom he had known from boyhood), and in which Benjamin Webster also appeared, with whom he had not played since 1840, when he was under Webster's management.

It may here be stated, that he would not have appeared in such a play, or such a character, but to serve the author, whom he originally introduced to Mr. Webster, and was the means of the latter's producing several of his plays at different periods at the Adelphi Theatre.

One of the last characters that he played at the Princess's was Hamlet.* Soon after this he again appeared in Sir Pertinax Macsycophant; but one evening, when a cold east wind was blowing, in walking from the stage door (after performing this character) to his brougham, which stood in Oxford Street, although well wrapped up, he caught a severe chill, which laid him on a sick bed for some weeks. As soon, however, as he was able to be removed, he went to Ventnor, the air of which place in due time restored him to health and strength, although he was never again the same man upon the stage.†

* I went to see him the last time he ever performed in it, and I unhesitatingly say, although he was then within two or three months of attaining his sixty-ninth birthday, it was one of the very finest impersonations of that great character that I ever saw at his hands, and to my thinking *his* Hamlet was the finest the stage had had in my time; this was also the opinion of all the critics whose opinions I thought worth having. The house was crammed from floor to ceiling, and he produced as great effects as ever in all his great scenes; he was applauded to the echo, and called for several times, and received with the greatest enthusiasm. I would not have missed seeing that performance for something, as I felt sure it would be his last of that character, although it was not declared to be such, as far as the bills were concerned.—W. M. P.

† Up to that period I had seen little or no falling off in his physical powers, which appeared to me to have been marvellously preserved.—W. M. P.

After this he appeared in several revivals of Shakespearean plays at the Prince's Theatre, Manchester, then under the management of Mr. Charles Calvert, criticisms on which will be found further on. In London he played at the Gaiety, frequently, under the management of Mr. Hollingshead, whose article upon him, which appeared in *The Theatre* after his death, will also be found further on.*

In January, 1877, he made up his mind to commence playing his farewell engagements at all the principal provincial theatres, but he only carried this out at three, viz. Manchester, Dublin, and Liverpool.

Towards the end of 1877 he played for some time at the Aquarium Theatre several of his best characters, and agreed to act there again under Miss Litton's management early in 1878; but before this latter came off he, after repeated solicitations,

* It has been stated in an earlier portion of this work, that he had never sat for his portrait up to a certain period to any one but a cousin of mine, on my mother's side, to whom as a young and rising artist he was much drawn, and, like Mr. Macready with George Scharf, gave him an *entrée*, free, to the theatre, to enable him to study scenic effects.

In his latter days, however, he also became much attached to young Mr. J. Forbes-Robertson; indeed, so much so, that after he first played with him at Manchester in 1874, he always had him engaged to play Cromwell, Prince Henry, Egerton, Joseph Surface, and other characters. He also had a high opinion of him as an artist in oil, and sat to him for his portrait in Cardinal Wolsey, which, when finished, the Garrick Club purchased, and have kindly permitted a reproduction of it to appear in this volume. On the original the artist inscribed the words:

"Samuelem Phelps Tragœdum
Discipulus in arte scenica
Johnston Forbes-Robertson depinxit. 1878."

In 1876 his friend John Coleman became (unfortunately for him) lessee and manager of the Queen's Theatre, Long Acre, and to start his work with something like *éclat*, Mr. Phelps proposed to him, I believe, to play, as a prologue to his production of Henry V., the fourth act of Henry IV., in which he played his great character of the ambitious Bolingbroke, and those who saw him on that occasion will remember it as long as memory lasts. The production did not prove a financial success, and with a view to help the speculation a little, he consented to take half salary towards the end of his engagement. John Coleman has very gratefully referred to his performing for him on this occasion in a prize essay for which he gained fifty pounds.—W. M. P.

but against his will almost, agreed to recite at the Albert Hall the illustrative verses at a performance of *Athalie*, which had he not done he might still have been alive. He first of all caught a cold there at rehearsal, and increased it so much at the performance, either the same or next evening, that he had a bad attack of lumbago, a thing he had never suffered from before in his life. This was in the middle of a week in February, and he was to appear at the Aquarium on the following Monday, which he did, although altogether unfit. He acted all that week, and five days of the next, Cardinals Richelieu and Wolsey alternately, his last part being Wolsey, on Friday, 1st March.* Considering his state of health, he went through the part marvellously, until he came to the last great speech, commencing,

“Farewell, a long farewell to all my greatness,”

into which he introduced several incongruous words; but when he reached those lines,

“O Cromwell, Cromwell!

Had I but serv'd my God with half the zeal

I serv'd my king, he would not in mine age

Have left me naked to mine enemies,”—

he gathered himself up with tremendous energy, as was his wont, and almost on tip-toe, for one more triumph, gave them, as far as “zeal,” with all his usual grandeur and pathos; but after muttering a word or two more, he fell on the shoulder of his Secretary, and the career of our hero was closed.

All through the scene he had been, at his own request, supported by Cromwell, and never let go for a moment his nervous grasp of the Secretary's arm. He strained heroically against illness to reach his usual great effect; but after the opening burst, he entirely collapsed, and was almost carried off the stage by Norman Forbes-Robertson, who was playing with him, as he had done then for some time in place of his brother, the character of Cromwell. The house shook with applause, but

* He had told me long before this that the character he should like best to play when he took his farewell of the stage was that of Cardinal Wolsey. Did he think, I wonder, when he was being borne helplessly off by his young Secretary, Cromwell, that his farewell was already taken, and his wish fulfilled?—J. F. R.

the audience little dreamed that the object of their adoration was lying in his dressing-room almost unconscious, and that they had seen their favourite for the last time.

He was unable to complete this engagement, a thorough physical as well as mental prostration having set in, which laid him on a sick bed for some weeks, and from which it was at first feared he would never rise; but he rallied, and got down-stairs again. Change of air was prescribed, and an advertisement appearing in the *Standard*, stating that desirable lodgings were to be obtained at Anson's Farm, Coopersale, near Epping, Essex, the house was inspected, and proved to be all that could be desired. It was in the very heart of the country, and surrounded with beautiful scenery. The lodgings were taken, and he was there for some weeks. He came home almost, if not quite, himself again, but he promised the proprietor to return there for a time during the autumn. One rather stormy day in the summer he went from his house in the Camden Road to his favourite spot—the highest part of Finsbury Park—for a walk, but on returning he got caught in a tremendous downpour of rain, and was drenched to the skin. This again gave him a cold, and before he had thoroughly got over it, he went to pay a long-promised visit to his friend, Mr. Waterlow, at Great Doods, Reigate, which did not do him the good that had been hoped for. He was still indisposed when he came back, although everything that heart could desire had been done there for his comfort.

He now made terms with Mr. Chatterton to play a limited number of nights at Drury Lane Theatre before Christmas, and a like number in the spring of 1879, and then to take his farewell of the stage at that house, which he had promised Mr. Chatterton he would do some years before, if he was manager when the time should arrive for his retirement.

Towards gaining further strength (as he thought) for this purpose, and to keep faith with old Mrs. Smith, he again went to Anson's farm for a few weeks, but from which he never returned alive.* He caught a fresh cold there some time after

* The night before leaving home for Coopersale, and after my wife and his daughters had left the room we had been sitting in all the evening for another in which supper was laid, he said to me, "Now I suppose if I'm

his arrival which began to worry him, because he foresaw the possibility of its preventing him from keeping faith with Mr. Chatterton and the public (for of course he was advertised to appear), and this so worked upon his brain at last that it brought on another complete prostration and congestion, from which he was only released by death.* He was attended at Coopersale by a local surgeon and his assistant; but his last medical attendant, Dr. Delacour, of the Camden Road, and his nephew, Dr. Phelps, of Highbury, occasionally went down to see him. Some days before his death Sir William Jenner was called in to see if he could suggest anything different from what had already been done for him, but he only confirmed the treatment he had been under. He passed away quietly and peacefully, in the presence of his two daughters, and his young friend Mr. Harry Plowman, at half-past three in the afternoon of 6th November, 1878.

His remains were brought from Coopersale just before midnight of the 7th to his residence, 420, Camden Road; and on the 13th they were interred in the same grave with the wife whom he had loved so well, in the upper part of the cemetery at Highgate.

able to fulfil my engagement at Drury Lane, I shall net by that and my farewell benefit so much." I replied, "You certainly ought to do that at least." "Very well," he said, "what shall I have then to live on?" for he knew that I knew as well as himself what he had. I mentioned the sum more or less. "Well," he said again, "what will that give me per annum if you invest it in such securities as you consider safe?" "Well," I replied again, "I think I can guarantee you so much" (naming the sum). He pondered over it a minute or two, and said, "Well, if you have been able to live, with your family, as you have, upon the income you have had the last four or five years" (greatly reduced from what it had been for twenty years previously), "we three ought to live very comfortably on the amount you name, near some quiet trout-stream;" and with that he said, "Let us go down to the girls."—W. M. P.

* My wife has just reminded me that he was fond of going into the forest for a walk with her and one of his daughters, and on one or two occasions, just to try his voice, he began to declaim some of those beautiful lines of the First Lord, Jaques, and others, from *As You Like It*.

The last *conversation* I ever had with him myself was on the subject of the stoppage of the Glasgow Bank, some three weeks before his death; his brain on that occasion was perfectly clear, and I certainly never dreamed that his decease was so nigh at hand.—W. M. P.

His funeral was strictly private, as the family were sure such would have been his wish if he had ever been consulted. No members of the profession were invited, for the simple reason that it would have been impossible to know where to leave off if once commenced; and a notice was inserted in the *Times*, therefore, stating at what time the interment would take place. Considering the dreary wet day it was, the concourse of spectators was enormous. His two old comrades, George Bennett, then seventy-eight, and Henry Marston, then seventy-five, were close to the grave; but his old partner, who was only seventy-two, and *not* over four-score, as has been stated, was not able to be there, his health and the time of year not admitting of his coming out of doors in such weather.

The number of floral tributes received at the house was very large, not only did they fill his coffin, but they lay closely piled on the outside to a depth of at least eighteen inches. The four mourners in the first brougham carried a laurel wreath and a wreath of camellias, and two very large crosses of the same flower. The funeral *cortège* left the house at 12.45 P.M.*

Five broughams followed the hearse, in the first of which sat the Rev. Robert Phelps, D.D., Master of Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, his brother, two years younger than himself; W. May Phelps (one of the writers of this volume), his eldest nephew, whom he had treated as his eldest son for forty years; Rev. Robert Phelps Billing, Ph.D., and Mr. Edmund L. Phelps, nephews, the latter his above-named brother's eldest son.

In the second were Lieut.-Colonel Goodair, son-in-law; Mr. W. H. Goodair, junior, grandson; and Dr. Phelps, nephew, son of the Rev. Dr. Phelps.

In the third were Mr. Charles Turner Phelps (brother of W. May Phelps), Mr. Harry Plowman, Mr. George H. Haydon, barrister, and Mr. James Gurney, the two latter old and intimate friends who accompanied him frequently on his fishing excursions, more particularly the former, who was one of his executors.

* Our intention was to have had one of the new open cars instead of the old-fashioned hearse, but somehow or other this was not understood, and he was taken to that "bourne from which no traveller returns" in one of the latter. The funeral was conducted by Mr. George Bishop, of Doctors' Commons.—W. M. P.

In the fourth were Mr. John Forbes-Robertson (coadjutor with W. M. P. in this book), Mr. R. H. Wyndham, and Mr. E. D. Davis, the two latter old lessees of the Theatres Royal, Edinburgh and Newcastle.

In the fifth were Mr. Thomas Couchman Phelps (eldest son of W. May Phelps), Dr. Delacour, his medical attendant, and Mr. Thomas Underwood, his dentist.

In his own private carriage was Mr. Waterlow, accompanied by his friend, Mr. Latreille; four other private carriages brought up the rear of the procession.

The plate on the coffin bore the inscription: "SAMUEL PHELPS, born 13th February, 1804; died 6th November, 1878."

It was some time ere the cemetery was cleared of the carriages and pedestrians who had wended their way from all parts to see the last of the mortal remains of the man whom they had so frequently cheered by their presence during his lifetime, and whom they had all looked upon as the foremost actor of their day.

To those possessed of the *quid nunc* type of mind his well-spent life had a depressing and almost irritating monotony in it, for which they never altogether forgave him; but the more earnest portion of the play-going world, who knew that the stage contained other than mere Bohemian elements, and that contamination came to it more from without than from within, felt that, when Samuel Phelps died, England had lost not only a great actor, but a good man.

The two following notices appeared in the *North Briton*, an Edinburgh paper, dated 4th and 18th August, 1866 :—

MR. PHELPS.

"Mr. Phelps had a famous reception at the Princess's Theatre on Wednesday night, the applause on his appearance lasting over ninety-five seconds, a long time for a body of people to do nothing but clap their hands and cry hurrah. Mr. Phelps deserved this great reception. Had he never done anything but play Sir Pertinax, he would have been famous, and that personation will live for ever; but the British public owe Mr. Phelps a deep debt of gratitude not only for Sir Pertinax Maescyphiant, but for the interest he has taken, and continues to take, in the upholding on the stage of a pure Shakespeare. It is not too much to say of Mr. Phelps's efforts in this direction, that he has done more for the legitimate drama than any other manager or actor. There are other actors and managers who have contrived for a brief time to look bulky in the eyes of the public, and who have been largely praised by the newspapers, but none of them ever sustained such a campaign as Mr. Phelps did at Sadler's Wells—nor had any manager ever allotted to him the task which Mr. Phelps got through so creditably, of teaching a people with vitiated tastes to love Shakespeare, and of transforming a minor theatre into one of the purest temples of the English Drama."

"HAMLET AT THE PRINCESS'S THEATRE.—We have seen so many actors play Hamlet during the last twenty years that it would be difficult for us to enumerate them, or to say which of the personations pleased us most. Many of them were very good, some of them even of exelling merit, and the very worst of all would have some pleasing feature or telling point to make it acceptable to the public. In some respects Hamlet is an easy character to acquit one's self in, the language is so beautiful, the incidents so dramatic (we mean in the highest sense of the word), that any tolerably graced man can go through it. Before he can become a great player of Hamlet, an actor usually has to run through three stages: he first appears and recites the words, usually with more or less conceit, then he gets into the mechanics of the part, and struts and attitudinizes with immense industry, and after inventing two or three new postures, pronounces himself perfect, and at once sets up as a 'great' Hamlet. But if he turn out a persevering artist with aspirations after perfection in the histrionic art, he may attain to the third stage, and become a thoughtful representative of the character, able to hide the mechanism, and imbue the part with the philosophy which belongs to its language, or rather, so to speak, interpret the philosophy by means of the language, and confer also those graces of deportment which the Prince requires without thinking very much about the 'attitudes.' And even after undergoing this apprenticeship, the artist must not think his work

finished; for if he could practise for thirty years what it will take him thirty years to learn, he would still be deficient in many of the attributes of a perfect Hamlet. To be perfect in this character is for an actor to be crowned with the glory of his art. But there are not above three men in our time who have achieved this crown of the tragic stage. Phelps is one of them, and we speak the bare truth in saying that he is, without doubt, a giant in the part. To be frank with our readers, we must indorse the opinion of the Dublin critics, and say that Mr. Phelps plays Hamlet as if he were inspired. The beauty of his reading is something to remember; but when to his perfect elocution we add his grace of manner, his noble bearing, his royal courtesy to those who surround him, and when we mention that he understands what he reads and is able to make his auditors comprehend also, then we do not over-exact when we claim for Mr. Phelps the merit of being one of the greatest Hamlets ever known on the British Stage. There is not one of Shakespeare's characters that has been the subject of more controversy than Hamlet, and actors at times, in running after novelty in reading and gesture, have been apt to give contradictory views of his character; but this is an error that Mr. Phelps with scholarly judgment has avoided. His Hamlet is the same all throughout the long play, no matter what he has on hand, whether he is talking with the guards, encountering the Ghost, killing Polonius, advising Ophelia, philosophizing with Horatio, rebuking his mother, satirizing the King, apostrophizing the skull of Yorick, or fencing with Laertes. It is indeed one of the merits of Mr. Phelps, this striking consistency, which he keeps up throughout the action, but which is so difficult to sustain. Of course he has long been perfect in the art that hides art, but there are actors of intelligence and long standing who fail altogether in the unity of their parts—men who study points, and who, like serial tale writers, must have a few brilliant things in each act, but who fail, like the novelist, when the work falls to be criticised as a whole. Mr. Phelps gives us Hamlet as a whole, with a manner and elocution perfect throughout, as consistent and perfect in the fifth act as in his opening scene where he delivers that beautiful speech to his mother. It was Charles Lamb, we think, who said that no actor would ever be found who could act Hamlet perfectly. We suppose he was right, but we console ourselves in thinking that Mr. Phelps is an actor as nearly perfect in this part as we can ever hope to find any mere man."

The following appeared in the *Observer* of 21st October, 1866, on the production of Mr. Bayle Bernard's adaptation of Faust at Drury Lane Theatre:—

DRURY LANE THEATRE.

"Faustus, whether he was printer, philosopher, or magician, whether he was one person or two persons, or whether he never existed at all,

a sceptical suggestion having obtained in some quarters that he was merely a creation of mediæval fancy, has been a prolific subject for literary treatment of one sort or another. Marlowe enshrined his name amongst the heroes of old English drama, mixing up a good deal of coarseness with some marvellously fine poetry; Rich turned his adventures into a pantomime; Messrs. Terry and Soane brought him out at Drury Lane in 1825 as the hero of a romantic drama, with music by Bishop and Horne; he has been melodrama at Sadler's Wells and burlesque at the Strand; he has been subjected in Paris to the skilful manipulation of M. Michel Carré, to be transplanted by Mr. Kean to the Princess's, whilst the story of his operatic career with Gounod's music is as familiar as the success of that popular opera is unquestionable; and besides this his name was made use of, though not his story, by the librettist who wrote a book for Spohr to illustrate with his genius. 'The greatest is behind!' Goethe seized upon the floating legend, and converted it into a philosophical play—into one of those masterpieces which 'the world will not willingly let die,' and which, in spite of the declining influence of Germany upon European literature, continues to be ranked amongst the grandest creations of the human intellect, and worthy to be compared, as it often has been, with Hamlet itself. Of Goethe's play no dramatic version of the legend hitherto produced in this country has conveyed even a fair impression. The leading incidents have been made use of, but the profound philosophy has been discarded. The *thought* that infuses every scene has been suffered to evaporate, and it is only in the closet that the real merits of the play, in the poetical translations of Lord L. Gower, Anster, Blackie, and Martin, with the prose version of Mr. Hayward, not to forget the fragment by Shelley, could be appreciated by the mere English reader. In Germany Faust has always been a 'stock' piece. Last night, however, an attempt was made to convey to English play-goers some notion of the great German drama. A version by Mr. Bayle Bernard was brought out at Drury Lane with the modest announcement that it is 'an adaptation in several of its chief scenes of Goethe's romantic drama,' and its production was attended with a success that shows how wrong it is to imagine that a miscellaneous public, such as must necessarily be found in a large theatre, requires to be supplied for its amusement with sensational nonsense and vulgar concessions to what is by some persons considered the low taste of a mixed multitude. Every scene last night was listened to with the most profound attention, and even passages which might be supposed to require more than ordinary attention to appreciate them were in many instances followed by general applause. Mr. Bayle Bernard has done his work cleverly. Of course there are many parts of the original, such as the 'Intermezzo,' and much of the philosophical banter that has recondite meaning, which must necessarily be left out. Again, the mere question of length has to be considered; as it is written, Faust would require more than an evening for its performance. Compression, therefore, becomes a necessity and a test

of skill. Thus the first, third, and fourth scenes of Goethe are compressed into one scene, whilst part of the dialogue in the scene 'before the gate' is transferred to the scene of Auerbach's cellar. The best way to give those acquainted with the original a notion of how it is treated for the stage will be to enumerate the scenes of Mr. Bayle Bernard's drama in the order in which they occur. There is first Faust's study, in which the appearance of Mephistopheles and the execution of the contract takes place, together with the dialogue with the students, and the interpolated incident of Margaret's visionary appearance to Faust. Next comes the scene of Auerbach's cellar, the action of which is transferred to the outside of the tavern, in the great square of a German town, upon the banks of a canal or river. We have then Margaret's bed-room, with the presentation of the jewels, and the garden scene, with the alternated dialogues between Faust and Margaret and Mephistopheles and Martha, ending with a striking *tableau*, in which Mephistopheles appears on the wall, watching Faust and Margaret as they have just separated. This brings us to the fourth act or part, which opens with the scene at the well. Then comes the ascent of the Brocken, followed by the Walpurgis Night. The fifth part opens with the cathedral scene, in which occur the incidents of Mephistopheles whispering in Margaret's ear, and of Valentine's death. The prison scene is given almost in its entirety, and the drama ends with the conventional apotheosis of Margaret. It will be seen that nearly all the incidents of Goethe's drama are thus carefully made use of, whilst a very large portion of the actual dialogue is retained, the interpolations being few and almost all actually necessary. The language is forcible and pregnant with thought, and whenever passages are transposed from one part to another it is done with discrimination. In short, the adapter has got over his difficulties, and they cannot have been a few, with great ingenuity and judgment. The scenery, by Mr. Beverley, is entirely new. There are three views of old German towns painted in the truest spirit of mediæval picturesqueness, and a scene in the last act, 'The City Walls,' which even more than the more important and attractive ones shows in tone and feeling the true artist. The construction and arrangement of the Grand Place of the city, with its quaint houses and bridges, and the dull, stagnant-looking canal, is an admirable piece of stage contrivance and effective painting; yet still more remarkable, and, perhaps, more effective, is the mode in which Mr. Beverley has treated the Walpurgis scene. Broad, vast masses of rock thrown carelessly about, as if by some great convulsion of nature, meet the eye on every side, abrupt and frowning, amongst which the witches hold their revels. Crowds of wild figures in grotesque costumes rush about rather than dance at the same time that the fine choruses of Mendelssohn are sung. Strange changes of light lend a supernatural aspect to the action. Now everything is seen under a lurid red glare; now the light subsides into an unearthly blue grey, under which every form and movement appears almost terrible. The conclusion of this scene is remarkably striking.

As the beautiful witch Sibyl beckons Faust to follow her across the rocks at the back of the stage, Margaret rises in the centre in an attitude of appealing despair, stretching her hands towards her lover, and as the curtain falls the stage is filled with the various groups of witches and fiends thrown into the most picturesque combinations. After this the concluding *tableau* after Margaret's death, in which there was no particular novelty, fell somewhat coldly upon the eye. It remains only to mention that the dresses are correct, varied, and gay, many of them evidently suggested by the drawings of Retch; and that the music, which has been selected from the works of Spohr, Mendelssohn, and Weber, is well executed; some of the choruses of spirits are given with remarkable delicacy. The audience evidently considered the whole performance as a great success, for they were loud in their applause throughout, called several times for the principal performers, especially distinguishing Mrs. Hermann Vezin, twice for Mr. Beverley, and also twice for Mr. Chatterton, thus apparently confirming the enthusiastic character that has been penned of Goethe's Faust, that 'it appeals to all minds with the irresistible fascination of an eternal problem, and with the charm of endless variety. It has every element—wit, pathos, wisdom, farce, mystery, melody, reverence, doubt, magic, and irony; not a chord of the lyre is unstrung, not a fibre of the heart untouched.'

The following appeared in a morning paper on his Shylock in 1875 :—

GAIETY.

"There is a wide stride between Tottle's and The Merchant of Venice, but the attendance here on Saturday afternoon showed that if Byron and Toole can fill the house in the evening, there is still a place in the hearts of Mr. Hollingshead's patrons for Shakespeare and Phelps at least one time in seven. Shylock was presented by the eminent artist, who, with all his delicate appreciation of the value of words and all his fine mastery of the aids of the actor in illustrating them, does not see the need of sacrificing healthiness to novelty, with wonderful force and manliness. There will always be a doubt as to whether the bitterly vindictive character of the hardly-used Jew should be emphasized before or only after the flight of his daughter, and until it is settled one will be content that it should be kept in the background in the opening scenes. This is what Mr. Phelps did on Saturday, and it gave more vigour to his subsequent action, the tragedy of the discovery and its episodes contrasting splendidly with the comedy, the irony, and distrust of the early passages. Moreover, it gave the virulence of the pursuit of revenge a dramatic *raison d'être* which is at least in accordance with our present feeling towards the persecuted race. It would be a long task to go into the details of this finished performance, which alike won the admiration of the public

and of the professional element by which, as usual, it was supplemented ; but the passages with Salanio and Salarino, and with Tubal, and the trial scene came out with triumphant vigour. The curt replies to Gratiano, reflecting so much of the spirit of the tormentor, and the lines beginning 'What judgment shall I dread, doing no wrong?' telling a whole creed, were especially fine. The final catastrophe showed the Jew utterly overwhelmed. The words 'I am content' were barely audible, and the passage to the door was a long struggle against bodily feebleness ; it was not loud, but was very natural. Miss Rose Leclercq was the Portia, a little tremulous from nervousness, but sweet and womanly ; Mr. Forbes-Robertson, the Antonio, well read, but over melancholy-mild ; Mr. W. Belford, the Gratiano, brisk and in tone ; and Mr. Charles Harcourt, the Bassanio, emphatic, though perhaps a little more than necessarily rhythmical. The Launcelot and Gobbo of Messrs. Leigh and Cooper were creditable, and the same may be said of the Nerissa of Miss West. Miss Hazleton's Jessica was pretty and intelligent."

The following from the pen of Mr. Dutton Cook appeared in *The World* of 29th March, 1876 :—

MR. PHELPS.

"Within the last few weeks Mr. Phelps has been impersonating such widely different characters as Wolsey and Malvolio, Sir Peter Teazle and the Stranger, Shylock and Lord Ogleby ; giving abundant proof, indeed, that as an actor of force and variety he is still without a rival in the English theatre. Nevertheless, he appears but intermittently upon the scene. From time to time he treads the Crystal Palace stage, and on Saturday mornings he may usually be found engaged at the Gaiety Theatre ; but he has ceased to be a permanent member of any London troop ; he is not, for the present at any rate, concerned in any nightly representation. This may result from Mr. Phelps's free choice in the matter, or may be traceable to the fact that the altered condition of our stage denies him the opportunities he was wont to enjoy. In any case there is legitimate reason for regret that the play-goers of to-day should be permitted but interrupted and infrequent study of the art of a very sterling actor. Mr. Phelps must now be ranked among the veterans of his profession. Little decline is to be noted in the energy and pungency which have always characterized his histrionic method, and in certain of his characters he is still to be seen to very capital advantage ; but his early career dates from what now seems to be a very bygone period of dramatic history. He first appeared in London forty years since, having already acquired a fair measure of fame as a provincial tragedian. He was intrusted with a distinguished position during Macready's occupation of Covent Garden and Drury Lane. He was in some sort his

manager's lieutenant. He played Jaffier to Macready's Pierre, Iago to his Othello and Othello to his Iago, Macduff to his Macbeth, Gabor to his Werner, Joseph to his Richelieu, Adam to his Jaques, and so on. In 1844—the patent theatres having been deprived of the exclusive privileges they had long enjoyed and abused—Mr. Phelps undertook the management of Sadler's Wells, assisted by Mrs. Warner, an accomplished actress of tragedy. The little theatre in Clerkenwell, long devoted to pantomimic feats and coarse melodrama—of which the 'real water' of the neighbouring New River formed an important constituent—became now the appointed home of the poetic drama. He so educated his actors that they appeared even with distinction in works of the highest class. He was at once a liberal and a tasteful stage-manager. As an antiquarian illustrator of Shakespearean revivals he preceded Mr. Charles Kean by some years. In the course of his tenancy of Sadler's Wells, extending over some sixteen years, he produced every play of Shakespeare's, excepting only *Troilus and Cressida*, *Titus Andronicus*, and the three parts of *Henry VI.*: he even ventured upon the performance of *Timon of Athens*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Pericles*, and *Richard III.* from the original text, dispensing with the corruptions of Cibber. And other obsolete works underwent reproduction during his management: *The City Madam* and *Fatal Dowry* of Massinger; *A King and No King*, *The Maid's Tragedy*, and *The Honest Man's Fortune* of Beaumont and Fletcher; and *The Duchess of Malfi* of Webster. Nor were modern dramatists wholly neglected in this zeal for the Elizabethan repertory; from time to time were presented various new plays—always in blank verse, however—such as *The Priest's Daughter*, *The Florentines*, *The King's Friend*, *Judge Jeffries*, *Feudal Times*, *John Savile of Haysted*, *Garcia*, *Hamilton of Bothwellhaugh*, *The Fool's Revenge*, &c. If these productions for the most part effected no enduring impression, it must be remembered that no better works were at the time forthcoming or within the manager's reach. That Mr. Phelps did not lack enterprise in this respect is demonstrated by the fact of his negotiation for a new and hitherto unpublished drama by the late Lord Lytton, then Sir Edward Lytton Bulwer. But the author, through his friend and agent the late Mr. Forster, stipulated both for a high price and anonymousness—antagonistic conditions which necessarily prevented all adjustment of the transaction.*

“† As an actor of tragedy Mr. Phelps has assuredly been largely influenced by the example of Macready. It must be understood, however, that he has occupied a less exalted position: that, though invariably vigorous, intelligent, capable of very passionate delivery, and oftentimes exhibiting special command over pathetic expression, he has possessed less subtlety than the departed tragedian, has never

* This is altogether a mistake on the part of Mr. Dutton Cook; see pp. 7 and 8.—W. M. P.

† See my references to this entire paragraph on pp. 3, 4, 5, and 13.—W. M. P.

risen to the height of his nobler impulses, or those supreme outbursts of emotion with which he could upon occasion electrify and excite his audience in an extraordinary degree. Something of Macready's angularity of pose and action, with an inclination towards his rapid transitions of tone, is to be discerned in Mr. Phelps's system of performance; but his voice has less music, volume, and compass, if it is accompanied by fewer guttural or nasal murmurings and hesitations, than marked and rendered memorable his exemplar's mode of speech. But there is true fervour in Mr. Phelps's declamation, however it be now and then impaired by an undue deliberateness of utterance. Mr. Henry Morley, in his *Journal of a London Play-Goer*, would ascribe this slow pace of speech to the actor's many years' performance before a rude audience, whose inert minds it was necessary to impress by careful insistence upon almost every syllable of the text to be delivered, and, in consideration of its origin, counts the defect as like that of a scar won in honourable war. But in truth the mannerism is of an older date, and was handed down to Mr. Phelps by Macready, inheriting it probably from John Kemble, whose 'constitutional asthma,' as Macready himself describes the case, 'necessitated a prolonged and laborious indraught of his breath, and obliged him, for the sake of distinctness, to adopt an elaborate mode of utterance, enunciating every letter in every word.' On the whole, Mr. Phelps's best successes must not be looked for in the field of tragedy. Certain physical graces, distinction of manner and gallantry of presence, have been lacking in his representation of the heroes of poetry; nor could deficiency of this kind be completely met by the display of nervous energy, a restless ardour, and a sort of rugged chivalry of bearing peculiar to the actor.

"But in comedy Mr. Phelps takes higher rank than Macready, who, indeed, confined his efforts of this class to some few characters, wherein demand was made for humour of a polished and sophisticated sort, rather than for any measure of frank drollery. In addition, however, to such parts as Lord Townley and Mr. Oakley, Mr. Phelps has obtained genuine applause as Lord Ogleby, Sir Peter Teazle, Dr. Cantwell, and Sir Anthony Absolute. Since the demise of Farren, indeed, the characters for which he was so exceptionally famous have been presented by no one so admirably as by Mr. Phelps. Further, his command of the Scottish dialect has enabled him to portray most successfully the Baillie Nicol Jarvie of Rob Roy and the hero of Macklin's *Man of the World*; as Sir Pertinax Macsycophant Mr. Phelps has been from first to last wholly without a competitor. No doubt it is in comedy of an intellectual and somewhat caustic quality that he is seen at his best; his Falstaff, for instance, may be found wanting in joviality and natural unction, although every speech is not only appreciated by the performer, but so delivered as to tell with incisive force upon the audience. There is even danger of his oppressing them by the laboured intensity he imparts to every locution of the character; but, all the same, comicality of a special kind is not

absent from the representation. If the words are dwelt upon individually, as nails are hammered in separately, there is no question about their being driven home. And in estimating the merits of an actor, versatility must be fully taken into account. Mr. Phelps has not only played many parts, but in all of them he has attained a certain standard of worthiness, while in some he has pre-eminently distinguished himself. He has fairly satisfied his audience in the leading Shakespearean characters—he has been the Hamlet, the Macbeth, the Othello of the theatre, gaining great applause by his exertions; and nevertheless he has prospered in such peculiar parts as Bottom the Weaver, Malvolio, and Don Armado. He has impersonated both Henry IV. and Justice Shallow, Falstaff and Hotspur, Friar Lawrence and Mercutio, Petruchio and Christopher Sly, Timon, Antony, Brutus, and Parolles. In truth it may be questioned whether in all theatrical history account can be found of any other actor in possession of a repertory at once so extensive, so elevated, and so diversified. And this is not merely a case of flying at all game: in almost every instance the mark has been fairly hit, the quarry seized and secured."

The following appeared in the *Islington Gazette* of Tuesday 23rd July, 1867, on Mrs. Phelps's death:—

"'Died, July 17th, at 8, Canonbury Square, Islington, Sarah, wife of Samuel Phelps.' Such are the brief terms of an announcement which will carry far and wide over England a heavy private grief which has fallen upon a great artist and an estimable man. It is with no desire to intrude upon his desolation that we pen these lines. A word of sympathy may be offered without officiousness, upon so melancholy an occasion, to one whose artistic fame is world-wide, but whose domestic virtues can hardly have been known very far from the home which is now shaded by the wings of the Angel of Death. During a public life of many years, spent on the noblest and most arduous heights of one of the most intellectual of the arts, Mr. Phelps, so long our neighbour, and for a considerable period a valued benefactor to the most intelligent people of this neighbourhood, was cheered and soothed by the affection of the wife whom he has now lost; and during the whole of that period their devotion to each other has been one of the sweetest testimonies ever borne to the compatibility of a theatrical life with all the virtues that can adorn, all the purity that can hallow, all the felicity that can crown an honourable career. Writing in the name of a district too little sensible of the charms of the art to which Mr. Phelps has so sedulously and with such brilliant results devoted himself, we can assure him and his that while the news of their bereavement will carry sadness amongst many who know nothing of their private life, it will also thrill a tender chord in many who have the vaguest appreciation of theatrical fame.

"All can do honour to a well-spent life, and mourn over the rupture by death of domestic affection, which nothing else could have broken in upon."

On the 27th November, 1869, the Manchester paper, the *Sphinx*, had the following criticism on his performance of Othello:—

"Notwithstanding Charles Lamb's dictum that Othello is unsuitable for representation, and his opinion of the improbability of Desdemona's falling in love with the Moor on account of his complexion (an unusually cynical remark for the gentle Elia to make), the tragedy continues to be one of the most absorbing and effective on the stage, even when only moderately acted in some of the principal parts. The story is so thrilling in interest, so teeming with human passion, so abounding in pathos, set forth and illustrated with such exquisite poetry, that the attention of the audience is riveted from beginning to end.

"Our criticism last week of Mr. Phelps in the character of Sir Pertinax Macsycophant relieves us of the duty of further analyzing his general style of acting. On Saturday last, in Othello, the same keen insight into character, the same accuracy of conception, and facility of execution, the same evidence of close study, accompanied by spontaneous action during the progress of the play, were as distinguishable as they were in the former unique and remarkable impersonation. Mr. Phelps's conception of the character of Othello is, for the most part, the traditional one adopted by our greatest actors, marked by certain peculiarities of his own, but unaccompanied by any straining after novel readings. In the first two acts he represents Othello calm, tranquil, and imbued with a sense of modest self-respect. This is in strict accordance with the text, and is mirrored in the lines—

'My soul hath her content so absolute,
That not another comfort like to this
Succeeds in unknown fate.'

"Until nearly the close of the second act, Othello gives no intimation of his fiery nature. The first revelation of his temperament previous to his giving ear to Iago's diabolical insinuations, is his conduct in the scene after the midnight brawl, when he reiterates his demand, 'Who began it?'

'By heaven,
My blood begins my safer guides to rule;
And passion, having my best judgment collied,
Assays to lead the way.'

With the exception of this passage, in which Mr. Phelps gave the audience a foretaste of what was coming, he performed the first two acts with a quiet, dignified repose of manner, which, although in perfect harmony with the text, showed great conscientiousness and

self-control. Nothing could be more picturesque than his entrance in the second scene of the play. About his martial bearing and address, there was a certain barbaric dignity and pomp, appropriate to the character of the Moorish general. His manly affection for and pride in Desdemona were characteristic of the soldier bridegroom, whose 'arms since they had seven years' pith, till now some nine moons wasted, had used their dearest action in the tented field.' Mr. Phelps has always been remarkable for the possession of much pathetic power, and although his voice is not so flexible as it once was, it is still clear and resonant. For rugged pathos he has always been unrivalled among his peers, and his address to the Senate, without the slightest attempt at any ostentatious and elocutionary display, was remarkable for this quality, and made its way at once to the sympathies of his audience. It is not until the third act that we gain an insight into the turbulent fire lying dormant in Othello's breast, which afterwards burst into the raging flame which consumed him.

"The tremendous excitement of the third and fourth acts comes like a thunderstorm after the calmness of the first two. The well-graced actor's powers are tried to the uttermost, and wonderfully does Mr. Phelps come through the ordeal. The various passions and emotions—doubt, suspicion, love and tenderness, jealousy, hatred, fury, and self-abasement—which convulse the distraught and 'perplex'd' Othello are powerfully depicted, and have an electric effect upon the audience. This was so startling on Saturday night that, after some of the most thrilling passages, even the gods forgot to applaud—about the highest compliment which could be paid to the actor, and worth fifty recalls. Whether in listening to the hints and insinuations of Iago, or in giving way to the wildest bursts of rage, Mr. Phelps's action, attitudes, and gestures are in keeping with both. When Iago first hints a doubt and hesitates a dislike at the interview between Cassio and Desdemona, his indifference of manner is well assumed. When the insidious poison begins to work, and his suspicions are aroused, he starts as if stung by a serpent, and Iago's caution to beware of jealousy produces in him a mingled exhibition of rage and fear of himself which convulses his whole frame. When he tells Iago to set on his wife to watch, the accompanying look of disgust and self-humiliation at his suggestion of the espionage is very finely conceived; and, in perfect keeping, the same feelings are shown subsequently, when he contemptuously throws down the purse at Emilia's feet, exclaiming—

'We have done our course; there's money for your pains;
I pray you turn the key, and keep our counsel.'

"In the third and fourth acts the excitement culminates, and the consummation of the tragedy is anticipated. As a calm must follow all storms, so Othello's sobbing breast, his shaking frame, and frenzied rage are succeeded by a calm, and his demeanour in the fifth act,

until the moment when he slays Desdemona, is solemn and depressed. Deluding himself with the idea, 'It is the cause, my soul, it is the cause!' and that her murder partakes of the nature of a sacrifice, while he shrinks to 'shed her blood, or scar that whiter skin of hers than snow,' he never departs for an instant from his fell purpose. In this arduous scene Mr. Phelps's acting was subdued and in perfect good taste. His attitude and look when he emerges from the recess, when disturbed by the knocking, were startling and suggestive. Finally, when the truth is elicited, and he realizes the full horror of the situation—of the trick which has been played upon him, and the awful consequences—his burst of rage, despair, and remorse is appalling.

'Whip me, ye devils,
From the possession of this heavenly sight!
Blow me about in winds! roast me in sulphur!
Wash me in steep-down gulfs of liquid fire!—
O Desdemona! Desdemona! dead.'

The words were delivered by Mr. Phelps with an energy of speech and action, and a concentrated intensity, which were absolutely overwhelming.

"On Tuesday Mr. Phelps and Mr. Calvert changed characters. Alternating parts is always a hazardous experiment, and, we believe, much disliked by actors. We don't wonder at it, and on one occasion we recollect seeing Macbeth and Macduff becoming so confused, that they kept calling each other by the wrong names,—'Lay on, Macbeth,' and so forth. In so far, however, as it gave a Manchester audience the opportunity of witnessing Mr. Phelps as Iago, we are grateful for the arrangement. If anything were wanting to show Mr. Phelps's versatility; this impersonation would prove it. He completely shed the husk of Othello, and was the cunning, quick-witted Italian, with an outward show of honesty, to the life. Ever watching, ever scheming, whether he was wheedling, cozening, and befooling Roderigo, 'ensnaring' Cassio, tempting Othello, or making 'the net that should enmesh them all,' this sharp-witted, 'super-subtle Venetian' stood before us, the incarnation of malignity. Mr. Phelps's by-play and naturalness in this character are remarkable. Most actors deliver Iago's asides in a loud voice, and to the audience. Mr. Phelps repeats them quietly and rapidly to himself. As an instance—

'O, you are well tun'd now! —
But I'll set down the pegs that make this music,
As honest as I am.'

His mock humility was wonderfully displayed. Sometimes he looked like a transfigured Uriah Heep, sometimes like a gay young gallant, and sometimes like the ——. His final exit was equal to any other feature of the performance. Glancing round with one look of ineffable scorn, he reared himself erect and strode out of the room, defiant to the last."

The Manchester *Free Lance* of the same date had the following criticism:—

THE MOOR.

"It was not our intention, when last week we alluded to Sir Pertinax Maescyophant, to recur to the performances of Mr. Phelps at the Prince's Theatre.

"His representation of the character of Othello is, however, so unexpectedly forcible and graphic, that it would be unfair to our readers to pass it over entirely without notice. This statement is made in the full recollection of what Mr. Phelps was at Sadler's Wells Theatre many years ago—of his talents, his industry, and his success. Since those days he has wonderfully improved where improvement seemed scarcely possible, and it seems probable that, if he keeps to the stage ten years longer, further progress in his art will have to be noted.

"The individuality of Mr. Phelps's Othello is to be sought in its contrasts. These are never violent, but they are strongly marked. As Mr. Phelps interprets Othello's character, he had within two distinct natures—one of doting fondness, the other of passionate hate, each running in its own channel, never meeting, never clashing, until the suspicions engendered by the villainy of Iago led to a mortal struggle for the mastery.

"The loving part of the Moor's character is expressed with extraordinary fidelity and truth to nature in his interviews with Desdemona. His fondness for his youthful wife is an infatuation—a delightful trance from which he fears to waken. So rapt is he in his devotion, that he can express himself only in the words—

'If it were now to die,
'Twere now to be most happy'—

and the wonderful meaning which Mr. Phelps imparts to this expression of rapturous content must be heard to be appreciated.

"On a recollection of the play as presented at the Prince's, one almost fails to remember the transition phase from this ecstatic state of love to the demoniacal hate which subsequently supplants it, and fills the bosom of Othello with a horrid thirst for the blood of his wife. Yet the transition is made by the nicest degrees, and after perplexity, doubt, and struggles against conviction. The truth is, that the overwhelming strength of the hatred which Othello conceives for the object of his former passion is so terrible as to force the contrast indelibly upon the memory, while the downward steps which lead to it are lost sight of. How the rage, the torment, the despair that fill the bosom of the Moor find expression in speech, gesture, and feature, cannot be described in printer's ink. They who remember what Mr. Macready *was*, can best comprehend what Mr. Phelps *is*. He abandons himself to the character. For the time he is Othello himself—in his

love, in his aversion, in his revenge, in his remorse. Gladly do we echo the recommendation that every resident of Manchester who has not seen Mr. Phelps in this character should hasten to do so while the opportunity lasts. And while upon this point, it scarcely needs hinting to the management that the next engagement of Mr. Phelps should be of greater length than the present. It pays, it instructs the people, it elevates the stage."

The *Manchester Examiner and Times* of 19th September, 1873, in noticing Mr. Calvert's production of *Twelfth Night* at the Prince's Theatre, says of Mr. Phelps's performance of Malvolio:—

"In returning to the consideration of the acting itself, the Malvolio of Mr. Phelps naturally claims the first notice. It is scarcely possible to speak too highly of this masterpiece of genuine comedy—an impersonation carefully and profoundly studied, consistent in all its details, and wonderfully in harmony with the true rendering of the author. We have seen more courtly, and perhaps more mirth-provoking Malvolios, but certainly not one which so thoroughly satisfies the most exacting demands of art. The key-note of Mr. Phelps's conception is found in a passage of one of Olivia's reproofs—

'O, you are sick of self-love, Malvolio,
And taste with a distempered appetite.'

We have, indeed, the embodiment of a narrow-minded man, utterly devoid of imagination, without a spark of humour, and puffed up by unbounded self-conceit. Because his vision is so narrow, it is perfectly easy to victimize him; and his constitutional inability to comprehend the clown's subtle humour, and the hearty fun of Maria, at once excite their disgust and make him their easy butt. Like all narrow-minded creatures, he is prone to suspect, and jealous of anybody else's influence in his own concerns; but his exalted sense of his own importance renders him liable to be tricked by any one who will flatter him. Mr. Phelps carries out this idea of the character with unfailing consistency; every movement and gesture, every glance and expression, eloquently indicate outrageous self-conceit and innate pomposity. He will barely condescend to speak to his fellow-servants before the vision of his future greatness dawns on him; and from the moment he begins to picture himself as the future Count Malvolio, condescension is converted into contempt, and the assumption of a noble manner heightens the ludicrousness of his heroic swagger. The actor's complete identification with his assumed character is one of the most noteworthy features of Mr. Phelps's performance: he is apparently unconscious of the audience; he never attempts to make a point, and never interferes with the subjective humour of the character by seeking to make it objectively comical. We have heard a much less mechanical

reading of the letter, and a more pointed repetition of the telling phrases and sentences in the interview with Olivia; but Mr. Phelps is certainly correct in making Malvolio less demonstrative, and less directly ridiculous than we sometimes see. We might call attention to many other excellent points in this artistic impersonation: the soliloquies are delivered in a manner which might be advantageously imitated by the members of the company, and the by-play is invariably judicious; but no greater display of histrionic talent is seen than in the last scene, where Malvolio is at last convinced that he has been made a fool of. The imprisonment had not opened his eyes to the trick, and he had looked forward to a triumphant revenge; but when, from his lady's own lips, he hears how utterly baseless his hopes have been, despair almost overpowers him—almost, but not quite, for his sense of self-importance comes to aid him even then; there is something almost pathetic in the struggle between his dignity and his bitter anguish, and what is too deep for words the actor's face most eloquently portrays. And here, too, success is achieved without the slightest exaggeration; and excessive display of rage would not only have been inconsistent with Malvolio's character, but would have bordered on burlesque. As Mr. Phelps acts the part, the valedictory threat is just as appropriate as are the farewell words of Shylock after his degradation at the trial scene."

The *Manchester Courier*, speaking of his performance of Henry IV. and Justice Shallow, in the Second Part of King Henry IV., on 30th September, 1874, when the play was produced by Mr. Calvert at the Prince's Theatre, Manchester, said:—

"We are now at liberty to turn to the actual performance of the play, and we have no hesitation in saying that Mr. Phelps has never been seen to better advantage, either in comedy as Justice Shallow, or in tragedy as King Henry IV. Anything more intrinsically comic than the braggadocio of the garrulous Justice it is impossible to conceive. Mr. Phelps has seized the character almost intuitively, and exhibits the vanity, fussiness, and senility of the country squire with a force that can scarcely be equalled. But it is in the Jerusalem Chamber, as the dying King, that Mr. Phelps is seen in one of the best—probably *the* best—of his many successful impersonations. The King, sinking beneath the consequences of early hardships and late excesses, is seen a dying man at the comparatively early age of forty-six. No less a patriot than a soldier, he contemplates with anxiety the fate of his country when it shall be swayed by the sceptre of a prince who has shown himself hitherto nothing but a frivolous and rakish companion of swash-bucklers and the lewd courtesans of the city. The gradually failing vision is obscured by tears as he mourns the excesses of his heir, and as he recurs by fits

and starts to the crooked courses whereby he gained the crown. His famous soliloquy on Sleep—one of the finest poems that ever was expressed in language—is mournfully uttered, and the words drop from his mouth in tremulous accents, as affecting as they are in contrast with the magnificent ‘appliances and means to boot’ by which he is surrounded. Not less touching is his reconciliation with his son; and it is here that Mr. Phelps makes a ‘point’ which none but the truest artist would have discovered. It occurs in the line, ‘Come hither, Harry, sit thou by my bed.’ The broken emphasis with which he articulates the single word ‘Harry’ conveys whole volumes of pathos, and speaks an affectionate reconciliation which a careful culling of all the words of endearment in an entire language could not equal. We are mistaken if any actor of the past half century has approached Mr. Phelps in this most impressive situation.”

The *Manchester Guardian* of 6th March, 1877, said :—

PRINCE'S THEATRE.

“The long reign of pantomime is over, and we chronicle to-day with undisguised pleasure the re-opening of the Manchester stage to the legitimate drama. The season could not have been more appropriately inaugurated than by the first of a series of performances in which Mr. Phelps proposes to take his farewell of the stage. The only matter of regret in connection with Mr. Phelps’s last engagement in Manchester (though at the farewells of eminent theatrical stars, as at lovers’ perjuries, they say Jove laughs) is, that the round of characters in which he is announced to appear should be so limited.

“In the meantime, we are thankful that he has selected as the opening of his present engagement his fine impersonation of Cardinal Wolsey. The play of Henry VIII. is rarely presented on the stage, for reasons which Monday night’s performance, miserably inadequate in many particulars, enable us to appreciate. But the part of Wolsey is one which the dramatic student will not willingly let die, and that cannot perish so long, at least, as there are great actors, or to speak with more precision, actors of legitimate ambition, left to the stage. We cannot say, and we regret it, that the performance generally was worthy of the play or the house. In the impersonations of the King, and of Buckingham, the mischievous, we had almost said demoralizing, influence of Irving was conspicuous. The minor parts, with one or two exceptions worthy of mention, were marred by the laxity induced by the long course of extravagant burlesque, in which those who bore them have been steeped. But to Phelps’s Cardinal Wolsey we turn, as might a wayfarer tossed about with every wind of dramatic doctrine, to lay fast hold upon the permanent, unshaken rock of faith. Here there is true acting—the mirror held up to nature,—a living human being, swept by true if stormy impulses, for whom all that is said

and done in his presence has a true and close interest, a sensitive instrument that responds to every touch, powerful or delicate, with appropriate note. It is difficult, writing under the spell of the grand closing scene,—the exhibition of Wolsey greatest in his fall,—to throw the mind back upon the effect of the earlier passages; upon the details of delicate by-play through which the overweening pride of Wolsey, the craftiness, the self-deception, the coquetting with conscience, the avarice, the diplomacy, the overreaching ambition of the arch-plotter are betrayed. All these traits in the character of the wily priest-diplomat, who presumed to make popes and kings his playthings, and the honour and happiness of virtuous women his pawns, were, it is needless to say, faultlessly depicted. But we can only think of the third act—of Wolsey's fall—the farewell to his greatness, the noble dignity of his rebuke of Surrey and the Lords who sought to humble him, the luminous, self-searching revelation of himself and his estimate of the grand possibilities he has missed in his interview with Cromwell. If ever the moralizings of a clear, master intellect, which has debated with itself the question, 'What shall a man profit if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?'—nay, who has played and lost, and feels his loss—can be visibly portrayed before his fellow-men, it is in Phelps's representation of Wolsey's famous soliloquy. At its close it rises into absolute grandeur. Even the pathos of the confession—

'Oh, Cromwell, Cromwell,
Had I but served my God with half the zeal
I served my king, he would not in mine age
Have left me naked to mine enemies'—

is forgotten in the presence of the almost prophetic inspiration which fills the old tottering human wreck that utters it. It seems as if behind the actor and the personage an outer impulse possessed the worn-out frame, and speaking by his lips pronounced the condemnation of a life-work misapplied."

The *Manchester Examiner and Times* wrote of him on 7th March, 1877, as follows:—

PRINCE'S THEATRE.

MR. PHELPS'S FAREWELL PERFORMANCES.

HENRY VIII.

"Nothing could have tempered the regret with which all lovers of the national drama have heard of Mr. Phelps's intended retirement from the stage except the announcement that, by a series of farewell performances, he would at once refresh his admirers' remembrance of his most successful efforts, and enable even the youngest generation of play-goers to acquire reminiscences on which, in the course of years, it will be a pleasure and a pride for them to dwell. How the number

is diminishing even of those who remember Mr. Phelps's distinguished co-mate, Mr. Macready, in the days preceding his self-imposed exile from the stage! Even Mr. Charles Kean, who shared with Mr. Phelps an ardent devotion to Shakespeare which will always be remembered in honour, has become a mere name to many. And Miss Helen Faucit, associated with Mr. Phelps in so many a joint effort of true art, has said :

‘I wish you well, and so I take my leave,’

and long before this had ceased, except occasionally, to irradiate a scene on which she has left no successor. And now Mr. Phelps, too, is bethinking himself of a repose which no one has better earned than he, and is paying Manchester the compliment of beginning his series of farewell performances at our Prince's Theatre. Though we would fain hope that for once he might be better than his word, and, like one or two actors of note before him, retire to return, we fear it would be futile to indulge in any such fond speculation, and trust that, since this is to be a farewell, it will meet both here at Manchester and elsewhere with the cordial response to which it is so signally entitled. Mr. Phelps is too well known among us for it to be necessary to dwell upon his claims to an admiration and a respect such as no other living English actor can challenge in the same unique combination. It is now forty years—all but a few months—since he first came before a London audience (in the character of Shylock). Since that time many changes have come over the English theatre, but Mr. Phelps has been true to himself through them all. In other words, he has never failed in that self-respect which in an artist means self-devotion to the noblest purposes of his art; and if we applaud an analogous kind of consistency in an author, and marvel at it in a statesman, it deserves at least an equal recognition in a member of a profession which must ‘please to live.’ The stage owes something to Mr. Phelps for this; for though neither one nor many actors can keep the national theatre as a whole free from the ignobilities which degrade, and from the impurities which pollute it, yet the example and influence of one high-minded artist of eminence elevates and refines the national conception of the functions of the drama, and arrests with a force—often incalculable—the sinking of hope, which is the surest symptom of decay. As an actor, Mr. Phelps has so conspicuously shone in both the tragic and the comic drama, that it would be an error to suppose him and his art to have confined themselves to spheres from which it is easy to look down upon a lower world of effort. In Shakespeare, indeed, he has found the majority of the characters in which he has become famous; but one of the names of Shakespeare's genius is infinite variety, and (to mention only plays which we momentarily call to mind) of what other living English actor of the first rank can it be said, that in him not only Hamlet, and Macbeth, and Wolsey, and Henry IV., but also Falstaff, Malvolio, and Bottom have found an invariably effective, and most of

them a pre-eminently effective representative? Sir Giles Overreach and Luke are other characters of the old drama associated with Mr. Phelps's name; but he has not been less successful in parts belonging to the romantic drama of the present century, or the character-comedy of the last; and in his present brief series of performances at Manchester are to be included his Richelieu, his Job Thornbury, and, we rejoice to find, his Sir Pertinax Maescycophant. In all these, and in many other characters, Mr. Phelps has found room for the exercise of that power which is his by nature, but to which cultivation and study have so largely added—the power of giving distinctiveness to each character in which he appears.

“As in a perfectly preserved picture by an old master, in Mr. Phelps's characters there is nothing blurred or vamped up; they are all thoroughly elaborated as well as thoroughly conceived. If it be said that in all of them it is easy to recognize the artist's own style, there are two remarks to be made in answer to this favourite cavil of perfunctory criticism. In the first place, there are very few great actors known to fame, and there is certainly none known to the experience of the present generation, who possess that absolute power of self-transformation which is not infrequent in minds of a humbler class, but which is only very rarely combined with art of a higher order. Secondly, there is a uniformity which ignorance alone condemns as sameness, and that is the uniformity of a clear, distinct, and intelligent elocution. In this respect, Mr. Phelps is always like himself, and we never wish him to be otherwise. Let it be hoped that with him the tradition of an utterance which enables every person in the audience to hear and to understand an author's text will not be lost to the English stage. Without this a dramatic performance of Shakespeare himself reduces itself on the stage to a succession of ‘points,’ and in the audience to a succession of ‘sensations.’

“But though here at Manchester we naturally look upon Mr. Phelps as an actor first and foremost, it must not be forgotten that the English theatre owes him something more than his long and illustrious services in this capacity. His quite unique experiment as a manager—when through a series of years he brought all the plays of Shakespeare home to the sympathies of a suburban London theatre, and victoriously overcame obstacles before which any less generous ambition would have quailed—will live in the annals of the English stage after the aberrations of many a fashionable house shall have been forgotten. Such labours as those of Mr. Phelps at Sadler's Wells help to keep the history of the theatre sweet; and when liberal and benevolent minds seek to bring the great popular influence of the drama into harmony with the true ends of all popular culture, it is from the example of such efforts that they may take courage to point the moral that when ‘the thing's to do,’ it should and it may be done. Identified during a memorable period of his public career with the theatre which may be truly called his creation, Mr. Phelps's figure has been from time to time a familiar one on the ‘historic boards’ where he

gained his first national laurels. Here at Manchester he has lent the aid and sanction of his co-operation as an actor to efforts—now, alas! equally efforts of the past—in harmony with his own endeavours as a manager; and he has even beyond the seas taught the lovers of the English drama that Shakespeare is still honoured among us where his genius can be most comprehensively studied and most thoroughly appreciated—on the stage.

“The play in which Mr. Phelps appeared last night is one admirably suited to a personal farewell. *Henry VIII.*,—whatever the opinion of modern critics as to its authorship may be worth,—is rather a history than a tragic drama; and though tradition speaks of not only Queen Katharine, but King Harry, as an effective part, the dramatic interest centres in the figure of Cardinal Wolsey, and except in the trial and the last scene of the Queen, is almost absorbed by it. Mr. Phelps judiciously selected this favourite character, in which his elocutionary powers have so fine an opportunity, and in which his grandeur of gesture and dignity of bearing may be allowed full play. The self-contented repose of the first act, and the politic anxiousness of the second were, as usual, clearly distinguished from the overthrow—never passing into the indignity of a collapse—of the third. It is a peculiarly happy touch that Mr. Phelps’s Cardinal holds his head erect when doing obeisance to the King at the very moment when disgrace is upon him; and the emotion of the scene with Cromwell is an emotion only, though a deep and bitter one, not a theatrical metamorphosis of the man. In many ways Mr. Phelps could not have been seen to more advantage than he was last night, when a full and enthusiastic house attested the enduring effectiveness of his Wolsey.”

A week later the same paper said:—

“Mr. Phelps is this week alternating Richelieu with Wolsey, affording thereby a contrast by no means to the advantage of Lord Lytton’s workmanship as a dramatic author. The two portraits have at first sight much in common. Both are wily politico-ecclesiasts, scheming, crafty, and ambitious. In both the sentiment of patriotism is present, in conflict with consuming zeal for the Church; and in both the national feeling is overborne by the dominant influence of Rome. But Lord Lytton’s Richelieu differs from Shakespeare’s Wolsey in this essential respect, that while Wolsey pursued a policy to which he made everything, including the most sacred human affections, subservient, Richelieu rules by expedient and device, is swayed by caprice, and suddenly changes his intentions towards the King’s enemies, to gratify the wishes of a favourite ward. The one is a grand historical character; the other, notwithstanding his great cleverness and readiness of resource, a mere stage statesman. Mr. Phelps, as might be expected, and as everybody who has seen him knows, admirably distinguishes the two characters. If his Wolsey is greatest, it is because the character is greater. Nothing could be more complete

than his identification with each character. In Richelieu, even in make up, he is the fox; in his genial moments, when apparently he gives way to honest and kindly impulses, we are in doubt, like De Mauprat, whether he is not mocking a victim whom he is about to entrap. Even the unsatisfied state in which he leaves the spectators at the fall of the curtain is artistic. We should wish to like Richelieu, and cannot altogether. We are impelled to hate him, and dare not utterly. Even our admiration of his transcendent ability and knowledge of human nature is mixed, since the danger and futility of his devious policy is abundantly transparent, and induces the contempt which is due to a palpable exhibition of shiftiness and short-sightedness. But as a piece of acting, Mr. Phelps's Richelieu is altogether admirable. The subtlety and complexity of the character are admirably illustrated by the wonderful facial expression and by-play of which the veteran artist is so wonderful a master."

The *Liverpool Daily Post* of 30th March, 1877, had the following on his Sir Peter Teazle:—

ALEXANDRA THEATRE.

"Last night another opportunity was afforded of witnessing the Sir Peter Teazle of Mr. Phelps, which has not been seen on a Liverpool stage for many years; and a large audience found genuine pleasure, not merely in seeing Mrs. Saker's handsome face again, but in appreciating the ease, the gaiety, and the other good qualities of her very successful performance.

"Mr. Phelps's Sir Peter is a mine of histrionic treasure, enriched rather than impoverished as time ambles with him towards the sunny close of an honourable and laborious career, every step of which has led his countrymen in pure and elevated paths. The varied experiences of the old married bachelor—his quaint soliloquies, his talks with his wife in every connubial mood, his satirical encounters with the 'scandalous college,' his brusque homeliness with his old friend Sir Oliver, his pathetic confidence with Joseph, his intense enjoyment of that sentimental purist's escapade with the little French milliner, and his grim dignity at the crisis of the screen scene, when he is no longer 'in the dark'—afford Mr. Phelps endless opportunities for exhibiting that perfect and pregnant finish, which, without fuss or overlaying with superfluous detail, affords an audience a constant change of intellectual enjoyment. The filling out is simply beautiful, the result of rare experience, and judgment not less rare, applied with a calm deliberation that allows each fruit of reflective invention to come to its fair perfection.

"Take such a detail, for instance, as Mr. Phelps's entrance when he finds Joseph Surface in his study 'improving himself.' Once seen it is a simple thing enough to enter so quietly and admiringly, to step softly up behind the studious Joseph, to look for a moment at his

attitude with cordial approval, then to raise the double eye-glass and look over his shoulder closely, in order, as it were, to share for a moment the pleasure of his favourite's studies. But how satisfying and delightful is the effect of this well-considered prelude to the dialogue! In a broader view nothing can be finer—nothing truer either to the situation, to the characteristics of approaching senility, or to the author's humour—than Mr. Phelps's intense but restrained enjoyment of the 'joke against Joseph.' His mirth, which seems to make the old gentleman a sort of animated champagne-goblet of merry ecstasy, is quite contagious, and the humorous gratification which he suppresses rather than expresses in a series of inarticulate but infinitely amusing sounds, is freely indulged by the audience in peals of laughter, followed by appreciative bursts of applause. It would be tedious to go into more lengthy particulars. These are a couple of instances of the versatile, but profound excellence of a performance which many of those who were present last night will hereafter boast with just delight of having seen."

On the 24th of October, 1876, at the banquet given to the theatrical profession by Mr. Alderman Cotton, when Lord Mayor, at the Mansion House, Mr. Phelps, in replying to the toast of "The Shakespearean Drama," with which his name was coupled, spoke as follows:—

"I can say very little to you about the Shakespearean drama beyond what I dare say the greater portion of you already know. But my object in speaking to you to-night is for a very different purpose.

"The Lord Mayor has spoken much of the educational power of the drama. You will forgive me if I speak of myself more than good taste would suggest. If I do so, it is only as exemplifying what is to come after.

"Some years ago I took an obscure theatre in the north of London called Sadler's Wells, and nearly the whole of my brethren in the profession, and many out of it, said it would not last a fortnight. It lasted eighteen years, and my stock-in-trade chiefly consisted of the plays of Shakespeare. Now I determined to act, if possible, the whole of Shakespeare's plays. I acted thirty-one of all sorts, from aged Lear to youthful Pericles, and the thought begotten in my mind latterly was, that if that theatre could be made to pay, as I did make it pay, not making a fortune certainly, but bringing up a large family and paying my way—well, ladies and gentlemen, I

thought if I could do that for eighteen years, why could it not be done again? But mark you, I found that about every five or six years I had fresh audiences, that plays would bear repeating again and again, and by a peculiar economic method of my own I was enabled to repeat them without any very great expense. Well, if that could be done by me as a humble individual, why could it not be done by the Government of this country? Why could not a subsidized theatre, upon a moderate scale of expense, be added to the late educational scheme, by which children are forced somehow or other into school?

"I maintain, from the experience of eighteen years, that the perpetual iteration of Shakespeare's words, if nothing more, going on daily for so many months in the year, must and would produce a great effect upon the public mind. Moreover, I have at this moment in my possession hundreds of letters from men of all sorts and conditions who came to see me at Sadler's Wells as boys, and who have written to me as men to say that they received their first glimpse of education at that theatre. They have gone on improving in the world, doing this, and that, and the other which I cannot tell, as I have not time, but I have those letters in my house in proof of what I say.

"If I could find any member of Parliament (which I fear is hopeless), I would willingly devote what little of life remains to me, to point out the way in which this could be done, and I would willingly give evidence in the House of Commons to prove the truth of Shakespeare's educating powers.

"I merely throw my bread upon the waters; it may float away and disappear for ever, but I throw out the hint in the earnest hope that it may gather strength, and that it may come back after many days."

On Mr. Phelps taking his farewell of the Manchester public, in 1877, the following address, beautifully illuminated and bound in morocco, was presented to him by the Brasenose Club, of which he was a member:—

TO
SAMUEL PHELPS, ESQ.,
FROM
The Brasenose Club,
MANCHESTER.

DEAR SIR,

A few of your fellow-members of the BRASENOSE CLUB, desire in this form to bid you a respectful and affectionate adieu on your approaching retirement from the stage.

We only follow universal opinion in recognizing in you one of the last, and assuredly not the least, of those who, through the course of a life-time devoted to the culture and exposition of the noble dramatic literature of the country, have laboured, whether as actor or manager, to consecrate the theatre to its highest purposes.

Were it your merited praise simply to have founded with your own hands an asylum for the disregarded and declining drama, and to have maintained it by your genius and perseverance with such success that a remote and ill-frequented suburb of London became for years the centre of attraction to Shakespearean students, a school of reviving taste, and the rallying ground of lofty impulses not yet, we would believe, exhausted, your name would deserve to be held in lasting recollection and esteem.

We also, however, honour in you the gifted personal expositor of numerous beautiful and instructive creations, endowed through you for thousands of hearers with a charm and intensity of meaning which, without your powerful aid, they would never have been discovered to possess.

To one who has exerted himself with so much success to raise the national character by refining the intellectual amusements of the people, it is no exaggeration to address the language applied by the Poet Laureate to one of your most distinguished predecessors, Mr. Macready, on his taking leave of the profession in which he was intimately associated with yourself—

“Rank with the best,
 Garrick, and statelier Kemble, and the rest,
 Who made a nation purer through their art.
 Thine is it that our drama did not die,
 Nor flicker down to brainless pantomime,
 And those gilt-gauds men-children swarm to see.”

We reflect with pleasure on the bond of union between you and this Club, which will not be broken by the cessation of your periodical visits to Manchester.

If our local opportunities of seeing you have been comparatively few, they have been all the more warmly cherished, and it is with sincere regret that, while hoping for you many years of deserved repose in private life, we face the necessity of bidding you, in your public capacity, a grateful and admiring FAREWELL.

JOSEPH MANCHESTER, *Chairman.*

L. W. ANDREWS, *Treasurer.*

JNO. ROBT. NEWBY, *Hon. Secretary.*

*Brasenose Street, Manchester,
 March 17th, 1877.*

Alfred Aspland, F.R.C.S.
 T. Walton Gillibrand.
 William Alfred Turner.
 Arthur G. Symonds, M.A.
 William Bright Morris.
 William Leader.
 Henry Measham.
 George Evans, F.R.S.L.
 Charles Estcourt, F.C.S.
 Harry Bridson, M.A.
 J. Lees Aspland, M.A.
 Fra. Hampton.
 Samuel Taylor, M.A.
 Richard Smith, B.A.
 J. Fox Turner.
 Thomas C. Johnson.
 Charles Schuster.
 J. Edge Partington.
 G. W. Smith.
 F. R. B. Lindsell.
 John Nelson.
 E. Hulton.
 Alfred Darbyshire, F.I.B.A.
 H. M. Brazil.
 Edward de Jong, Chevalier.

F. P. Rickards.
 T. Edmondson.
 H. W. J. Tracie.
 J. J. Armitage.
 George Freemantle.
 H. E. Prest.
 Thomas Browning.
 George Falkner.
 John Bagshaw.
 W. D. Jeans.
 Abel Heywood, Junr.
 William C. Lord.
 Joseph B. Forster.
 Thomas Worthington.
 Selim Rothwell.
 J. H. Davies.
 William Morton.
 William Hull.
 William Lamb Hockin.
 William Warburton.
 Robert Pollett.
 J. F. Faraday.
 J. Houghton Hayne.
 J. Ewald Pendleton.
 E. Leader Williams, Junr.

John Slagg.
 Henry Watkinson.
 H. M. Acton.
 Samuel Beaumont.
 Alfred Sington.
 Frank Merriman.
 Edward G. Simpson.
 Thomas Swanston.
 William Grimshaw.
 F. A. Haserick.
 William Knight Keeling.
 Christopher Sparrow.
 John Angell, F.C.S.
 Edwin Waugh.
 A. H. Danes Colley.
 Nath. Cartwright.
 John Dewhurst Milne.
 Henry A. Schwabe.
 Charles R. Allen.
 Howarth Ashton.
 T. C. d'Anguier.
 W. R. R. Gemmell.
 George H. Fryer.
 John Shuttleworth.
 E. Salomons.
 Vernon Cochrane.
 J. G. Lynde.

Edward Milner.
 R. W. Edmondson.
 James H. Lynde.
 Gustav Voigt.
 Peter Allen.
 Henry Knowles, L.R.C.P.
 Edward F. Lloyd, R.E.
 Leonard Tatham.
 William Sidney.
 Robert Leake.
 J. H. E. Partington.
 J. G. Wehner.
 James Lamb.
 Thomas Tatham.
 Ottley S. Perry.
 Richard Gay Somerset.
 H. Bowman.
 Christian Reimers.
 W. J. Buckley.
 Samuel Barlow.
 G. Sheffield.
 George Hayes.
 Edward T. Bellhouse.
 Edward Atkinson.
 William Abercrombie.
 John Heywood.
 Samuel Buckley, F.R.C.S.

The following lines appeared in *Punch* on the 16th of November, 1878:—

SAMUEL PHELPS.

BORN, 1804. DIED, November 1878.

So falls the last of the brave troop who fought
 A good fight for a nobler, statelier Stage;
 When young hearts, young hopes swelled to the high thought
 Of spells that should renew the Drama's age:
 That bright hope grew, took shape, and of it came
 Great plays of old, presented with new power;
 Purer *one* theatre, at least, became,
 And all was quickened life for a brief hour.

Swift as it rose the light began to wane,
 When they that could best aid to it have given,
 Set faces hard, and thought of pence to gain,
 More than of Art, that 'gainst the tide had striven.

And when the chief of that foiled enterprise
 Laid down his truncheon, this man did not fear
 With smaller force, and in less stately guise,
 To hold the same good fight for many a year.

Lifting rude hearers from their rough disport
 To rare, invoking SHAKESPEARE's magic spell,
 To work its wonders on the baser sort,
 The downward bent of joyless souls to quell.

Bringing all Beauty, Terror, Tenderness,
 Fantasy's wildest freaks, Mirth's brightest face,
 Humour's most potent charm, athwart the stress
 Of all Life has of sordid, foul, and base.

And nightly, year on year, with brief stage-cheat,
 Out of a workday world, poor, grim, and grey,
 Bearing the crowd on Art's wings, wide as fleet,
 To fairer lives, and realms of summer day.

For eighteen years who knows how much of hope,
 Grace, sweetness, aspiration, this man's art
 Has sown or strengthened, impeded what wings, to cope
 With downward drag of counter, street, and mart ;

Set what founts flowing, ope'd what windows wide,
 Done what schoolwork, as school but rarely can ?
 On all this he might well look back with pride,
 As one who had wrought well in cause of man.

No common Actor either, he could reach
 A range of various parts, from grave to gay ;
 With simple touches probe the heart, and teach
 By pause, hand, look, what words are weak to say.

None better gave the struggle of strong will
 With yearning heart ; * none with more power portrayed
 The loving father, † hardening himself still,
 Till by the voice of nature overruled.

* Job Thornbury.

† Old Dornton.

His name brings back the mad Midsummer Dream,
 And ass's head of the Athenian Clown :
 With him as Falstaff in Eastcheap we seem
 To feed Hal's laugh, and wither at his frown.

But less, just now, behoves us call to mind
 All that the Actor was, than fairly tell
 How much his work of managing combined,
 To earn good word from those who wish men well.

Honest and hearty, howso curt and gruff,
 None knew but to respect the sterling soul,
 To learn that deep down in his gnarled stuff
 Lay a soft core beneath the rugged bole.

Farewell to him, and honour to his work,
 Done years ago, but not yet passed away :
 Whose growths in unexpected places lurk,
 To bless and cheer, to solace and to stay.

The following appeared in *Funny Folks*, November, 1878 :—

SAMUEL PHELPS.

1804—1878.

Sweet memories shed—
 As fragrant blossoms from a coronal
 Gratefully fall—
 Around our Greatest Actor lying dead.

Too soon to say
 How great the genius that our land has lost,
 Or, to its cost,
 What of its Drama's strength he bears away.

Dear is his name
 Who gave anew our Shakespeare to the stage,
 And from the age
 Won thence a warrant of unending fame.

Honoured and dear
 His memory, who, transcendent in his art,
 Played too his part
 Upon life's stage without reproach or fear.

From the *Islington Gazette*, Monday, 11th November, 1878:—

“By the death of Samuel Phelps we lose one whose name has been as a household word with Islingtonians. Few among us of mature age have not preserved a remembrance of a long series of dramatic triumphs that invested old Sadler's Wells with noble traditions, and which were the creation—the life-work, in fact—of the earnest student and great actor who has just passed away. For eighteen years our amusements were chastened, our recreations refined, and our minds instructed by one who, excelling in his art, earnestly strove to elevate its practice. It is well known that during the period that Mr. Phelps devoted himself to the production of the legitimate drama at the old house in Clerkenwell, he battled as much against financial misfortune as a degenerate taste. It needed, to sustain Shakespeare and kindred poets in a dignity worthy of them, not merely one of surpassing talent in their interpretation, but courage to bear the disheartening coldness with which at times that interpretation was received. Samuel Phelps fulfilled both conditions. Beginning with an audience which had been the most unruly and depraved in London, he set himself to educate the people of the north in the beauties of the higher drama. It is related of him that, in the first weeks of his memorable management, he found it necessary to personally quell disturbances in the front of the curtain, and for that purpose he has been known to leave the stage with but a cloak over his theatrical dress. He conquered quickly however, as much by his firm will as his histrionic genius, and he soon gathered around him a host of students, who were fascinated and enchanted by the master. He did more: he formed a company of players whose eminence in their several positions was hardly less than his own, and whose names occupy some of the most prominent places in the history of the modern stage. Sadler's Wells became the temple of the legitimate drama. There, with taste unquestionable, with erudition thorough, and industry unfailing, Mr. Phelps produced numberless plays with a completeness that has seldom, if ever, been equalled. Each one would furnish an old playgoer with topics for a week's gossip. Unlike his contemporary, Charles Kean, who at that time was astonishing London with what were sometimes sneeringly described as displays of stage upholstery, Mr. Phelps aimed not only at pleasing the eye with scenery and stage groupings, but at bringing into worthy prominence every quality of his authors. His company, under his exacting, but not unkind discipline, worked with the unanimity and devotion of enthusiasts. They caught some of his fire, and not a few of them in after days had reason to thank their leader for the quality. He won the respect of every one of them, *and he was the idol of his audiences.* Living amongst us for so many years, dying almost amongst us—for he had only temporarily left his Islington home when he passed away—he was claimed by Islingtonians, who felt they had more than an ordinary share in the general estimation of his great abilities. In

losing him they must feel the loss of a friend; of one whose name recalls the pleasantest recollections, whose genius beguiled many a happy hour, whose life and work were a protest against the oft-times sweeping condemnation of those who strut their little hour upon the stage."

The *Western Times*, an Exeter paper, contained the following account of Mr. Phelps's earlier career on Tuesday, 12th November, 1878:—

MR. SAMUEL PHELPS.

"The death of this eminent actor on Wednesday will awaken interesting reminiscences in the minds of very old play-goers of Exeter. It was about 1836 that Mr. Phelps came to Exeter as the leading tragedian. His superior style of acting, and his quiet, amiable, 'untheatrical manners,' as they were termed, gained him many friends, and among them was Mr. Thomas Latimer, who enjoyed his talents as an artist, and his society as a sober, thoughtful student of the Elizabethan poets. They walked many score miles together in Devonshire, and so modest were Phelps's aspirations at that time, that being in Babbacombe Bay, reclining on the rocks together, he said to the writer that he would undertake for £300 a year never to go out of that wild and romantic spot. Babbacombe Bay at that time was not very far removed from a state of nature. Beyond the Cary Arms, and a couple of cottage residences or so, there were no denizens. It was the abode of innocence and peace, nothing contentious being nearer to it than Anstey's Cove—an old haunt of 'force-traders,' as the smugglers called themselves, and subsequently the abode of the late amiable bishop of the diocese. This, however, was a passing thought of the artist, enjoying in a beautiful day the soothing nicotine, and lulled by the measured beating of the sea as it broke on the pebbly beach beneath. The writer had assured him again and again that he was destined to go to London, and the reports which went up to town of the intellectual treasure-trove at Exeter led the manager of the Southampton Theatre to offer Samuel Phelps a 'star' engagement, which he went up and discharged. Macready went down to Southampton, saw him play, and engaged him at a salary of twelve pounds a week, which was about four times the sum he had at Exeter. Webster also saw him, and offered him an engagement on much more advantageous terms. He told Mr. Webster that he was engaged for Covent Garden. He replied that he opened before 'the Garden,' and engaged him for the short interval. Phelps appeared at the Haymarket as Shylock. Colonel Hamilton-Smith of Plymouth—an eminent scholar, and a great authority in historical costume—gave him the correct notion of Shylock's attire as he appeared on the Rialto, and in that guise Phelps appeared at the Haymarket; and having stood the first night, we were satisfied that he was accepted by London.

"Touching this 'first appearance,' the *Standard* of Thursday says:—

"More than forty years ago—on 29th August, 1837—an entry in Macready's Diary records:—"Sent for the *Morning Herald*, and read the account of Mr. Phelps's appearance, which seems to me a decided success. It depressed my spirits, though perhaps it should not do so. If he is greatly successful, I shall reap the profits; if moderately, he will strengthen my company. But an actor's fame and his dependent income is (*sic*) so precarious that we start at every shadow of any actor. It is an unhappy life." To a less jealous disposition than that of Macready the life probably is less unhappy; and, if success brought happiness, there is every reason to hope that the life of the actor whose early triumph is here registered was not unhappy, for the name of Samuel Phelps must now be added to the list of actors of the past.'

"Touching this 'jealousy' of Macready, it was our lot to hear a good deal, though in after years Phelps once 'confessed' in conversation with the writer that he should probably have done as Macready had if their places had been changed.

* * * * *

"The writer received from him a letter on the subject of his grievance, from which we make the following extract:—

"'98, Albany Street, Regent's Park.

"MY DEAR LATIMER,

"I am glad you have written to me, because I am now compelled to do that which I have thought of doing for the last six weeks—write to you. There are few things in this world afford me greater pleasure than receiving letters from those whom I esteem; it is therefore strange that one of my greatest antipathies should be in endeavouring to afford others the same gratification—but so it is. I seldom write till I am scourged into doing so.

"I am sorry to tell you I am not so happy, or even comfortable, as I expected—and ought to be. Macready is using me infamously. I have been now at Covent Garden since the 16th October, and have only acted four parts. I opened in Jaffier (*Venice Preserved*), and my reception was enthusiastic in the highest degree—the triumph being greater because Macready played Pierre with me. I then acted Othello, with the same degree of success. *Venice Preserved* was so highly spoken of and inquired for that he was obliged to do it a second time, but would not play in the piece himself—so weak a man is he that he cannot bear the idea of sharing the honour of a night with any one.

"During the last month I have acted only once a week,—Macduff, on the Monday nights, and on one occasion Rob Roy. He has made several attempts to force me into subordinate characters, which I

have resisted. I wonder you have seen nothing in the papers (Sunday). Several of them have taken up my cause very warmly: *The News, Satirist, Sunday Times, &c.*, have had very long articles relative to his treatment of me. So convinced am I that, had I been properly treated, I should by this time have stood on a pinnacle, that I have been employing an attorney to see if there was any legal way of getting off my engagement, and last night we took Sir William Follett's opinion on the subject, which I regret to say was unfavourable. The only alternative Macready will allow me is entering into a bond *not to act in London during the present Covent Garden season*, or to fulfil my engagement with him,—which, if he pursues his present treatment (and he will do so), will bend my spirit downwards to such a degree that its elasticity will be lost, and it will never spring into its place again. I have expended about £150 on costumes, but I am afraid I must for some time hang 'em up at home—to look at.

* * * * *

“I see very little of London, have refused all kinds of invitations—resolved not to put myself in the way of temptation. Our house is within a stone's throw of “Cockney Mount,” *alias* Primrose Hill. Thither I bend my steps daily, look down upon the great Babel—as least as much as I can see of it. I sometimes get a glimpse of Paul's Cross just peeping over the smoky curtain. I always fancy it gives me a friendly nod, and tells me to keep where I am. I turn my back on it, walk towards Hampstead, and bless my stars that I don't live in the “City.” Mrs. L. and the little ones, I hope, are as mine—all well.

“Yours sincerely,
“S. PHELPS.”

“He had three sons and three daughters. Two of the sons and one of the daughters are dead. She was married to a wealthy manufacturer of Preston. His eldest son, William Robert, a barrister, was appointed Chief Justice of St. Helena, in which post he died of typhoid fever, leaving a widow and three children,—his widow being second daughter of Mr. Thomas Latimer, of Exeter.”

After Mr. Phelps's death, in December 1878, Tom Taylor wrote of him, in the magazine called *The Theatre*, as follows* :—

“Somewhere between 1856 and 1859 Robson came to me with a request that I would transform Rigoletto from an opera to a play, as he thought he ‘saw himself’ in the part of the jester. I asked him

* This article is reprinted from *The Theatre* by the express permission of Mr. Clement Scott,—W. M. P.

why he should think of Verdi's *Rigoletto* when he had Victor Hugo's *Triboulet* within reach. I found, as might have been expected, that the popular actor knew nothing of *Le Roi s'Amuse*. His desire to play *Rigoletto* had been fired either by seeing Ronconi in the part, or by a description of the effect he produced in it. I told him at once to dismiss from his mind the idea of a conversion of the opera into a play. Horrors which were tolerable in a musical dress would be intolerable treated in a more naked stage form. Even Victor Hugo's drama, I added, as far as I remembered it, contained much that would in all probability be fatal to its acceptance by a British public, unexcited by the battle of Classicists and Romanticists, and only tolerant of horrors in its own measure and on its own conditions. But I would re-read Victor Hugo's play, I told him, and let him know the result.

"On reading *Le Roi s'Amuse* with this object (as I have already stated in effect in the preface to the printed play of *The Fool's Revenge*), I found so much in it that seemed to me, if not absolutely inadmissible, at least likely to be unacceptable on our stage, so much besides that was defective in that mainspring of stage-effect—climax, that I determined to take the situation of the jester and his daughter, and to re-cast in my own way the incidents in which their story had been invested by the French dramatist. I shall, no doubt, be told again, as I have often been told already, that 'this was very presumptuous in me, even if quite honest;' that a dramatic author has no business to borrow from the ideas of others; that the 'adaptor' is an objectionable person altogether, who cannot in fairness claim any higher function than that of translator; that Victor Hugo is a great classic, whose work should be sacred; that though Molière might say, '*Je prends mon bien où je le trouve*,' the saying has been perverted by those who construe it into a warrant for taking effective dramatic material wherever they find it, the phrase having really been used by the great French comic poet to justify the resumption of a scene of his own which had been appropriated without acknowledgment by a would-be rival—that it is, in fact, an assertion of the right to reclaim stolen goods, not a claim of special right on the dramatist's part to steal them. This I believe, in fact, to be a strictly correct interpretation of Molière's first use of the maxim which has so often been quoted in justification of dramatic larceny.

"Leaving all this, however, on one side for the present, and omitting any attempt to maintain the justice of my criticism of *Le Roi s'Amuse* as a stage-play, I have only to say that at that time I went with an untroubled conscience about my work of refitting *Triboulet* and *Blanche* into a new story with new surroundings. I had just been reading the history of the Italian Republics, and the story of the poisoning of Galeotto Manfredi, lord of Faenza, by his jealous wife, Francesca Bentivoglio, had struck me as highly suggestive of dramatic treatment. The jester and his daughter fitted readily into the

framework of a brilliant but vicious Italian Court of the Renaissance, with its reckless lusts, its dark intrigues, its fierce jealousies, its subtle and sudden poisonings. Here seemed to be an excellent medium for setting forth both the jester's wrongs, his long-cherished purpose of revenge, and its final miscarriage, under the mysterious guidance of that Divinity 'That shapes our ends, Rough-hew them how we will.' But the purpose of this paper is not to assert originality of motives or machinery for my play of *The Fool's Revenge*, though in fairness both to an illustrious French dramatist and myself, it seemed not unfitting to say this much of the drama which first brought me into personal contact with Mr. Phelps as manager of Sadler's Wells theatre.

"When the play was finished I read it to Robson. It had shaped itself into blank verse, as plays *do* shape themselves, as if by conditions of their own begetting. Now Robson had never played a blank verse part. His theatre—the Olympic—was not known in connection with blank verse plays. He liked the play and the part much, but whether it was a self-engendered fear of adventuring on a form of work new to him, and unfamiliar to his theatre, or an alarm inspired in him by his partner, Mr. Emden, the result, after much discussion, was my promising to write him another part instead of Bertuccio, and, after some little interval, my sending *The Fool's Revenge* to Phelps, who had already produced with success some of my dear old friend James White's historical plays.

"Phelps read my play with a promptness as gratifying as unusual. Except when managers are on the very horns of a dilemma, I have usually found even the best of them slow to read plays, slower to make up their minds about them, and slower still to make their minds known to the authors. The loss of the old-fashioned functionary, the 'reader' of a theatre, whose business it was to read all plays submitted to the management, and to pronounce judgment on them, is a very serious one for authors. Any risk of suffering by the reader's unfavourable verdict would, I should think, be more than compensated by the certainty of a reading within something like reasonable time, and a judgment of some kind,—in all probability quite as trustworthy as the manager's—an actor, in nine cases out of ten, who, if the piece contain a part for him, is but too likely to judge it entirely with reference to the chance he sees, or thinks he sees, of making a hit in that part.

"No doubt Phelps saw a good part for himself in Bertuccio. But, at least, he lost no time in satisfying himself, and me, that the piece would suit both him and his theatre, and that he would put it in rehearsal without delay. As far as he could see, he said, there were no cuts or changes wanted. I may say, *en passant*, that this judgment was borne out by the event. *The Fool's Revenge* is the only one of all my plays put on the stage absolutely as it was sent into the theatre, without alteration of a scene, a speech, or even a line, as far as I

remember, at rehearsal. I have no recollection of reading the play to the Sadler's Wells company. I rather think Phelps must have read it, but I may be mistaken; if he did read it, it is the only instance of managerial reading in my long experience of the theatre. But if I have forgotten the reading, I well remember the rehearsals. In consultation with Phelps, the period of the costume and scenery was fixed at the time of Francis I., though this was later than the date of the play. I suppose some scenery already in the theatre and costumes already in the wardrobe were thus made available. We were of one mind that, provided the scenery and costumes were effective in themselves, and consistent essentially with each other, a few score years too soon or too late were perfectly immaterial. That was before the days of absolute realism and scrupulous archæology; but not in the most precise and martinettish West End theatre of the time could more pains have been taken to realize correctness in essentials, and, above all, consistency of dresses and scenery, architecture, properties, and appliances, than in Sadler's Wells. In this respect Phelps seemed to me to hit the true mean between too much and too little as regards show, cost, and keeping in stage externals. All was thought of, and all was done that conduces to effect; nothing neglected that was needed to help the picture or impress the imagination. But there was no pedantry, no idle or ostentatious outlay, no insisting on archæological minutiae for their own sake; none of the feeling which made Charles Kean, at the Princess's, call out to the actor who was rehearsing Edmund in *Lear*, when he gives Edgar his key, 'Make more of the key, sir. Good God! you give it him as if it was a common room-door-key! Let the audience see it, sir; make 'em feel it, sir; impress upon 'em that it is a key of the period!'

"The cast of *The Fool's Revenge* included, with Mr. Phelps as Bertuccio, Mr. H. Marston as Manfredi; Mr. F. Robinson as Serafino del' Aquila, the young poet; Mr. Belford as Torelli; Miss Atkinson as the jealous, revengeful Francesca; Miss Heath as the pure and innocent Fiordelisa, Bertuccio's daughter; and Mrs. H. Marston as her duenna. I never saw rehearsals more thorough, more careful, or more business-like. Phelps was as able as he was indefatigable in stage management. He did the work of guidance and governance of his actors singly, and of the action as a whole; which nowadays, in nineteen cases out of twenty, has to be done by the author, or, failing him, is not done at all. Stage management, to one who remembers Macready at Drury Lane and Covent Garden, the Keans at the Princess's (where the wife wrought even more strenuously than the husband), and Phelps at Sadler's Wells, seems, with rare exceptions, a lost art. When one thinks how all-important for stage results good stage management is, one may well stand aghast at most of what passes for it in these days. It would be well if both English managers and actors could be put through a course of rehearsals in a good French theatre, that they might see how our

neighbours understand and practise this, as other parts of their theatrical business.

“But I never saw French rehearsals more careful and thorough than those of my play at Sadler’s Wells under Phelps. [He had something of the irritability of Macready, and was not slow to give stupid, or, still more, careless people the rough side of his tongue; but his heart was so evidently in his work, he was so thoroughly master of the business he was directing, he so evidently thought of and for all, never sacrificing other scenes to his own, or other actors to himself, that his little ruggednesses and fiercenesses never rankled, and were rarely resented even at the moment. Then his example of strenuous diligence operated on all about him, and made them attentive and strenuous too in their several degrees, so that no time was lost; and, though the rehearsals were so strict and elaborate, they took up no more time than more slipshod ones would have done. In short, rehearsal, as I saw it in the case of my own play at Sadler’s Wells, was what rehearsal should be, continuous, well-considered, patient shaping of the play for public performance, in which not merely the groupings and movements of the personages were attended to, but the delivery of every speech watched—nay, the emphasis and pronunciation of every word noted.] There were many Italian names to be delivered, which Phelps was most careful to have rightly pronounced, not let slide in the happy-go-lucky fashion which is the rule, or rather no rule, of the average English theatre, where every actor seems at liberty to put his own pronunciation on any word of a foreign language that comes in his part. When the play was produced on the 18th October, 1859, after three weeks of patient and laborious rehearsal, more than equivalent to twice as much time less well employed, the good result was apparent in a smooth, level, and satisfactory performance, with no stage hitch in scenery, speech, or movement, in which nothing had been left to chance, nothing sacrificed to carelessness. Phelps himself was admirable in the part of Bertuccio, which in the earlier scenes perfectly suited his sardonic and saturnine manner, while in the interview with his daughter it gave scope for that deep and yearning affection beneath the hardness and harshness which made the actor so great in parts like Old Dornton and Job Thornbury, to my mind beyond question his masterpieces; while in the third act it afforded an opportunity, of which Phelps availed himself with immense effect, of presenting the cross-currents of many moods and motives—exulting malignancy, snake-like insinuation, anticipated triumph, gratified revenge, passing through many phases of doubt and bewilderment, and culminating in the horrible conviction that Bertuccio has compassed his own child’s abduction and dishonour—perhaps death. I have never seen acting more intense than in his desperate attempts to wear the jester’s mask, in the hope that it may secure him access to the pavilion in which his daughter is shut up at the mercy of the ruthless Duke, and in danger, besides, of the poison of the jealous Duchess. If ever actor satisfied author, Phelps satisfied

me in Bertuccio. I have always thought it his most powerful impersonation, though from the great strain it put upon him it soon became too much for his strength, and when I last saw him in the part I was sensible of a great falling off.

"The play was successful, and had a considerable run—such a run, indeed, as at Sadler's Wells, with its public in great measure local, and its habitual, almost nightly, frequenters, was considered quite out of the common. After a time it was played, as was usual, with other pieces. Twelfth Night was one of them. I remember an amusing incident to which the alternation of The Fool's Revenge with Shakespeare's comedy gave occasion. The friend who told me the story was sitting near a respectable elderly man, who had listened to Twelfth Night with great enjoyment of the rollicking humours of Sir Toby, the shallow conceit of Sir Andrew, and the grave self-satisfaction of Malvolio, and had shown such sense of the tender sweetness of Viola, the archness of Maria, and the love-longing of Olivia, as might be expected from any one of a Sadler's Wells audience in those days. But he was apparently one of those who knew no more of Shakespeare than Phelps revealed to him, not one of the many more deeply initiated whom he had sent to the fountain-head of inspiration—Shakespeare himself. Unluckily, he had unwittingly got hold of a bill of the day before, with the announcement of The Fool's Revenge, and thought all the time that he was assisting at my play. At last he turned to my friend: 'Well, I must say it *is* a clever play—a'most as good as one of the real old uns; but I don't see why it's called by that name.' My friend, not aware of his neighbour's mistake, and perhaps not exactly seeing himself how the comedy comes to be christened Twelfth Night, did not attempt to enlighten him. At last, in the scene where the Clown, after getting Malvolio shut up as a lunatic, interrogates him through the grating as Sir Topaz, the stranger turned round to my friend, chuckling with an air of immense relief: 'Ah! he's down on him, ain't he? I *see* now why they call it The Fool's Revenge.' And then my friend learnt for the first time that his neighbour had sat so far through the Twelfth Night in the quiet conviction that he was assisting at my drama.

"When I look back on what I then saw of Mr. Phelps's management in action, the enormous labour of his rehearsals, the conscientious thoroughness of his acting, and his abandonment to the passion of his part, his devotion every day and all day long to the labours of his art and the cares of his theatre, I feel I can understand better than those who knew his work only in its finished results, as it came before the public eye, what an enormous amount of Phelps's best life must have been put into the eighteen years of his management of Sadler's Wells. Knowing how much of mental as well as bodily strain those eighteen years' work must have cost him, I feel how wretchedly inadequate must have been his reward, either in money made, reputation won, or credit and honour given, had it not been for

the other and incalculably higher rewards derived from love of art, sense of duty fulfilled, and that consciousness of good work done, which is all the sweeter the harder are the conditions of the doing. I have not time or space here to say what I should like to say of the good work done by Phelps at Sadler's Wells. To my mind he stands out as one of the most potent and profitable among the unrecognized and unrewarded civilizers and educators of his time. He brought a noble and admirable form of the art which, above all art, combines all the elements that appeal to the popular imagination within reach of a local public, which had before his time seen that art only in its most debased and coarsest forms; to say nothing of that larger public which, during the eighteen years between 1844 and 1862, found in Sadler's Wells stronger and better served stage food for the eye and mind than they could find in any of the more aristocratic quarters of the town, or any of the more pretentious homes of the drama, during the same period.

"When the educating and refining influences of the stage, as the great fuser and applier of all the arts, for working on masses as well as on units of mind, come to be more adequately appreciated than they are, the work done by Phelps at Sadler's Wells in continuation of that initiated by Macready at Covent Garden and Drury Lane will have a chance of being fairly estimated."

E. L. Blanchard also, after Mr. Phelps's death, wrote the following, which appeared in the *Era*, the *Glasgow News*, and a Birmingham paper, to all three of which he was a contributor:—

"No actor—of the present century, at least—has ever passed away leaving so many varied theatrical recollections behind him as Samuel Phelps, around whose grave in Highgate Cemetery assembled yesterday troops of his professional companions, representing all the best theatres in the metropolis, and crowds of personal friends who had happened to survive the man for whom they entertained such strong feelings of regard. Indeed, we should have to go back to the days of Garrick to find his compeer in embodying alike with equal success the contrasted impersonations of Shakespearean character furnished by no less than thirty-four plays of the national dramatist, all produced in succession by Mr. Phelps during his eighteen years' memorable association with the management of Sadler's Wells. David Garrick never attempted to exhaust the repertory of Shakespeare in this manner, but he succeeded in displaying equal talent in comedy and tragedy; and no follower of the histrionic art has since shown more comprehensiveness of power in this respect than the thorough artist whose vivid and varied portraiture can no longer delight the play-goer. To even enumerate the names of the long list of characters played by Mr. Phelps during the half century which commenced with his early experience of an actor's provincial life in the York circuit,

and closed with his latest performances of Richelieu and Wolsey at the Royal Aquarium Theatre in the spring of the present year, would require not a column of a newspaper, but the pages of a volume. That in some instances the obituary notices have done but scant justice to the vast ability he displayed may be readily explained by the circumstance that few of the critics who saw him in his best days are left alive to repeat the appreciative opinions expressed thirty years ago, at which time the departed actor may be said to have attained the zenith of his histrionic position. It is one of the penalties a public favourite has to pay for the privilege of living on, that each year lessens the number of those who can remember the achievements of other days; and when the value of a name only is left to be discussed in a play-bill, the measure of approval is very naturally apportioned to the effect produced. A spectator witnessing the decay of that physical power once spoken of as the ground-work of an excellent reputation must hesitate to indorse former opinions. Hence comes disappointment and disparagement, and it is quite possible that the present generation, attracted to the later performances of the actor by the fame he had acquired in his manhood, came occasionally away from the theatre with a doubting faith in the truthfulness of past eulogies. Those who yet survive to tell of the happy intellectual hours they enjoyed at Sadler's Wells during the memorable management of Messrs. Phelps and Greenwood, from 1844 to 1862, will bear ready testimony to the excellence of impersonations which, both in Tragedy and Comedy, have never been surpassed during the present century.

“Away from the exercise of the art to which he so earnestly devoted himself, Mr. Phelps was simply to be regarded as a quiet country gentleman of reserved habits, fond of rural pursuits, addicted to the exercise of the gun and the fishing-rod, and perhaps prouder of his skill with both than of the warmest plaudits of an enthusiastic audience. During the theatrical vacation he was to be found for many successive years at his favourite haunt, the Lion Hotel at Farningham, in Kent, where he stayed for weeks together to enjoy the pleasure of trout-fishing in the River Darent, which ran its meandering course in front of the gardens of the old hostelry. The farmers in the neighbourhood never suspected that a visitor who conversed with them so freely about their crops was at the same time busy in studying the best mode of rendering the next Shakespearean play to be revived on the banks of the New River; and it is on record that a Kentish yeoman, bringing his family to town for the purpose of seeing *The Doge of Venice* at Drury Lane, and recognizing a familiar voice and manner in the prominent actor, astonished the audience in the midst of the play by involuntarily exclaiming—‘Blest if the Dodge isn’t the old Farningham fisherman.’”

From *The Theatre*, December 1878:—

MR. PHELPS AT THE GAIETY.*

BY JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.

“Mr. Phelps’s first appearance at the Gaiety Theatre was in the week before Christmas, 1873, when he was engaged to give nine special representations of certain old comedies, in conjunction with Mr. Charles Matthews, Mr. J. L. Toole, Mr. Hermann Vezin, Mr. Lionel Brough, &c. He made his first entry as Dr. Cantwell in *The Hypocrite*, Mr. Toole playing Mawworm for the first time after a very short period of study, and the rest of the characters being represented by Miss Farren and members of the Gaiety company. This piece was played for six nights to the largest receipts ever known at the theatre, and the following three nights were devoted to Colman’s comedy of *John Bull*, with Mr. Phelps as Job Thornbury, Mr. Toole as Dennis Brulgruddery, Mr. Charles Matthews as the Hon. Tom Shuffleton, Mr. Hermann Vezin as Peregrine, and Mr. Lionel Brough as Dan, supported by the general company. The receipts were equally great for these three nights, and the orchestra was utilized for extra stalls. Mr. Phelps, unlike Mr. Charles Matthews, did not consider himself injured by appearing in this combination, and this short preliminary engagement was the forerunner of many others, which were equally pleasant and profitable to both of us. As in Mr. Charles Matthews’s case, there were no written agreements between us, but we perfectly understood each other’s views; and from December 1873, to the day of Mr. Phelps’s lamented death, he considered himself more or less engaged to me, and never thought of any public appearance without coming to consult me. At first I used his invaluable services at my Saturday *matinées*, and at these he played a number of his best comedy parts, intermixed with Cardinal Wolsey and Shylock. He avoided Sir Pertinax Macsycophant for nearly four years, and I never pressed him to play it. He told me he thought it was the most trying part in the whole range of the British drama, and when he felt physically equal to it he would let me know. The time came at last, after one of his long fishing holidays, and the result was a very fine performance of his great comic masterpiece.

“When Mr. Toole went to America in 1874, and I had the amphitheatre in Holborn and the Opera Comique in the Strand under my direction, in addition to the Gaiety, I was enabled to offer Mr. Phelps a night engagement at the Gaiety. We produced *The Merry Wives of Windsor* at Christmas, 1874, with scenery by Mr. Grieve, and original music by Arthur Sullivan. Mr. Phelps played Falstaff, and associated with him in the cast were Mr. Hermann Vezin, Mr. Arthur Cecil, Mr. Righton, Mr. J. G. Taylor, Mr. Belford (one of his old

* This article also is reprinted from *The Theatre* by express permission of Mr. Clement Scott.—W. M. P.

Sadler's Wells company), Mr. Forbes-Robertson, Miss Furtado, Miss Rose Leclercq, and Mrs. John Wood. Probably the most pleasant member of the company was Mr. Phelps. He had an amiable faculty of 'making himself at home.' When he first joined the regular Gaiety company—a company not generally associated with the so-called 'legitimate drama'—he behaved as if he had been amongst them all his life; and with the company mentioned above—some of them specially engaged for *The Merry Wives of Windsor*—he was soon on the very best of terms. Instead of sitting in state in his dressing-room, he passed much of his time in the green-room, and entered into all the little amusements of the place in the most pleasant manner. Fines were instituted to punish those who were found tripping in the text of Shakespeare, and once or twice Mr. Phelps was caught (on evidence probably not very trustworthy), but he paid his fines cheerfully. The money was ultimately spent in a bowl of punch.

"One result of his Gaiety engagement was, that he was induced to come a little out of his domestic retirement. I persuaded him to become a member of the Garrick Club, and Mr. Arthur Cecil persuaded him to take a Continental tour, as, with the exception of his visits to Berlin and Dresden, he had never been out of his own country. He was much impressed with Paris and Italy—with what he called the 'stage management' of the brilliant city, and the beauty of the Alpine scenery.

"He played at the Gaiety during his various engagements, in addition to the parts previously mentioned, Sir Peter Teazle (repeatedly), Bottom the Weaver, Jaques, Lord Ogleby, Richelieu, &c., &c. His mind was very active, and he was always ready to study a new part. At one time he thought of playing Bill Sykes in a proposed version of *Oliver Twist* by Mr. Andrew Halliday. If he had been ten or fifteen years younger he would probably have taken a West End theatre, and repeated the experiment which he carried out so nobly at Sadler's Wells. He had no conservative prejudices against anything new, and the last time he was within the walls of a play-house was at the Gaiety Theatre."

On the next page will be found a tribute to Mr. Phelps's memory, penned by an ardent admirer, who saw him in every character he performed from the year 1849 onwards, and which was forwarded to us some months after the first announcement that this work was forthcoming appeared in the *Daily News*.

In Memoriam.

SAMUEL PHELPS.

"The last of all the Romans."

No sculptured marble marks his lowly grave ;
 No bay-tree from his ashes springs to light ;
 Yet—in our Memory locked—for ever bright
 Lives on that Spirit ; lofty, pure, and brave,
 Austerely tender and too proud to crave
 By outward sign the Fame that was his right.
 But myriad hearts recall his scenic might,
 Whose voice could call Melpomene from her cave,
 Or light Thalia's tripping steps could guide.
 Read here the list of what his genius wrought,
 Stately or quaint, each to the Gods allied,
 Each with our Shakespeare's deathless essence fraught,—
 And say what tomb fair-decked with scroll and frieze
 Would be memorial due to claims like these.

Stern TIMON's scorn—ARMADO's antic port,
 SIR JOHN's bluff wit—CORIOLANUS' pride,
 LEAR's tortured heart, and HAMLET's brooding thought,
 MACBETH's despair—old SHALLOW's senile whim,
 And PROSPERO's calm power lived in *him* ;
 SHYLOCK's revengeful craft—MALVOLIO's smile,
 High BRUTUS' honour—base IAGO's guile,
 PAROLLES' pretence—RICHARD's malignity,
 PERICLES' grief, and WOLSEY's majesty,
 MERCUTIO's gallant jibes, and BOTTOM's drawl,
 ANTONY's triumph and his direful fall,
 OTHELLO's trance, and SLY's bemuddled brain,
 Frenzied LEONTES—JOHN, to Guilt the thrall,
 Northumbrian PERCY with the spur of flame,
 POSTHUMUS, trustless in his gentle Dame,
 HARRY THE FIFTH—his Sire, wise in vain,
 And cynic JAQUES ;—*he* fulfilled them all :
 All golden links of a Shakespearean chain
 Such as our eyes shall never see again !

W. J. C.

LETTERS.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH BENJAMIN WEBSTER.

*Theatre Royal, Haymarket,
July 5th, 1837.*

MY DEAR SIR,

The great success of *The Bridal* has completely puzzled me as to fixing date for your appearance, as it will be politic for me to get Macready to renew for a short time, a point which I have not settled yet. However, if it meets your views, we will decide on the 28th of August or the 4th of September next for your first appearance, and I will do all required in the way of announcement.

Yours truly,

S. PHELPS, ESQ.

B. WEBSTER.

*Theatre Royal, Haymarket,
July 20th, 1837.*

MY DEAR SIR,

Will you let me know the three parts you wish to open in? I shall expect you at the end of August, when I hope we shall have a prosperous result.

Yours truly,

S. PHELPS, ESQ.

B. WEBSTER.

*Theatre Royal, Exeter,
July 25th, 1837.*

DEAR SIR,

I have delayed answering your last, having in the interim written to a friend in London, asking a few questions. I have just received his reply. He tells me he is not "fearful for the issue," provided I appear under something like favourable auspices; but that after Macready's run—coming almost at the end of your season, and just before the commencement at the other houses—probably in the midst of your benefits—the improbability of its being worth your while, *under such circumstances*, to *engage* me even in the event of my success—he thinks I am trusting that to *chance* which at another time might be made a certainty. I would feel obliged by your

candid opinion on the above view of the case. In the event of my coming to town, I would wish to avoid touching (at present) any of Macready's well-known and all-recognized parts. I have been most successful in some parts of the late Kean's which Macready, I think, has not played much, especially Shylock and Richard, with Sir Edward Mortimer, &c., though my way of acting them is *wholly and totally* different from Kean's or any other person's. I should like to open in *Shylock*.

Yours respectfully,

B. WEBSTER, ESQ.

S. PHELPS.

*Theatre Royal, Haymarket,
July 26th, 1837.*

MY DEAR SIR,

On the faith of your letter I have underlined you for more than a week past. As regards playing you in the midst of benefits, or bringing you up at the end of my season, that is not my mode of acting, and whoever informed you so was not in any way warranted in making such an assertion, considering I can continue my season to the 15th January, 1838, and commence again on the 15th March following. I shall announce you to-morrow for *Shylock*, and wishing you every success, I remain,

Yours truly,

S. PHELPS, ESQ.

B. WEBSTER.

LETTERS FROM W. C. MACREADY.

*8, Kent Terrace, Regent's Park,
London, July 18th, 1837.*

MY DEAR WIGHTWICK,

Will you excuse the trouble I am seeking to impose on you, and the hurried manner in which I do it? Some time since I received a Plymouth paper with a criticism upon the performance of a gentleman who rejoices in the name of Phelps; other accounts that I have had represent him very favourably. As it is not improbable I may have some concern in the direction of one of the Winter Theatres next season, I should very much wish to concentrate all the talent that can be brought together, and I am very desirous of having your opinion, which I so highly value, upon the merits of this gentleman. You will perceive by the papers that I am enjoying this "warm Tragedy weather" in the oven of the Haymarket; the adaptation of Beaumont and Fletcher's tragedy has been

quite a success. A few weeks ago I was very sorry to hear that Mrs. Wightwick had been so serious an invalid. I sincerely hope that her health is re-established—will you, with my very kind regards, say as much to her? When is your journey to town to take place? With every kind wish, believe me as always most sincerely yours,

W. C. MACREADY.

P.S.—Mr. Phelps is going to act at the Haymarket, when I shall see him; but I am anxious for your opinion.

8, Kent Terrace, Regent's Park,
July 30th, 1837.

MY DEAR WIGHTWICK,

I thank you very much for your letter, which I have had no minute to acknowledge before. I should be suspected of aping Mr. Dowling in Tom Jones if I were to attempt to describe to you how my leisure is taken from me. I work hard now in the hope that by getting ahead of my labour I may cease to feel its pressure as I do. Mr. Phelps is engaged to make his appearance at the Haymarket—to act three characters, and upon his success to receive an engagement there. I am much interested in the event, and shall be truly happy to foster and watch over the development of his talent, should he need such a professional friend; but I hope he is moderate in his expectations of *remuneration*, for ours is now a *struggle for existence*, not for profit, and every salary on our establishment is largely, but willingly reduced. I should like much to know what is his aim in coming to town: whether he has the “aut Cæsar, aut nullus” views of young Kean, or a resolution, in the love of his art, to study and toil for perfection in it. If I have the pleasure of any dealings with him, you may be sure that I shall be more than just to his deserts from the interest that you have evinced in him. Most cordially do I wish him success, and that he may add another actor to our scanty muster-roll. We are “progressing” very well here—the many as well as myself. With kindest regards to Mrs. Wightwick, and when you see my excellent friend Colonel Hamilton Smith, with earnest remembrances to him, believe me, dear Wightwick, always and sincerely yours,

W. C. MACREADY.*

* I am indebted to my friend Mr. E. Y. Lowne for copies of these two letters from Mr. Macready to Mr. Wightwick, as well as that from Mr. Phelps to Mr. Webster—the originals of which are in his possession.—W. M. P.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH W. C. MACREADY.

*Rose Cottage, King's Road, Chelsea,
February 1842.*

MY DEAR SIR,

Pray imagine I have said everything that can possibly apologize for troubling you. Kindness already received at your hands I feel should rather deter than induce my soliciting an extension of it. I have for some years had a severe struggle to keep my head above water; but have at length some prospect of being able to hold it there if the assistance I am about to ask from you will not be tasking your good feeling beyond what you may consider yourself justified in granting. For the sake of my young and increasing family I wish to effect an insurance on my life for £1000. The policy thereon I would lodge with you as security in the event of death; at the same time leaving in your hands a sufficient sum for the periodical payment at the insurance office, together with £5 weekly this season, and £7 next, for the liquidation of and interest on the sum of (I almost fear to name it) £300,* a great part of which I require to pay off a loan contracted on my first coming to London—to avoid the horror of taking the benefit of the Insolvent Act—at an interest of 45 per cent. The principal I am now called on to pay, and dread the sacrifice of nearly £400 worth of furniture, &c.; and worse than that, the disgrace of figuring as an insolvent after having endured a great deal to avoid it, and being willing to endure a great deal more. If you feel *justified* in granting my request I am certain you will do so; if not I am equally certain your reasons will be such as to prevent any mortification I might feel from refusal.

I am, my dear Sir,

Yours respectfully and obliged,

W. C. MACREADY, ESQ.

S. PHELPS.

*5, Clarence Terrace, Regent's Park,
July 30th, 1843.*

MY DEAR SIR,

I expected to have heard from you on Thursday last. Will you let me know if you have abandoned all idea of a voyage, or if you wish to see me again upon the subject?

* The favour asked was granted in the most handsome manner possible. For a copy of this letter, and copies of five others of Mr. Phelps's in this correspondence, I am indebted to the kindness of Jonathan Macready, Esq., F.R.C.S.—W. M. P.

I am concluding the arrangements with the New York manager.

Yours, my dear Sir,

Very truly,

S. PHELPS, ESQ.

W. C. MACREADY.

5, Clarence Terrace, Regent's Park,
February 28th, 1848.

MY DEAR SIR,

I enclose you a notice I have cut out of the *Plymouth Times* to draw your attention to the theatrical doings in the West,* which perhaps may lead you to a negotiation with the talented author. There is no hope for anything at the Princess's, and I am sick of any attempt to move the manager of it to proper exertions.

Yours very faithfully,

S. PHELPS, ESQ.

W. C. MACREADY.

5, Clarence Terrace, Regent's Park,
June 26th, 1848.

MY DEAR SIR,

You will perceive in this day's announcements, that Her Majesty commands (and I ought to say in the kindest and most considerate manner) a performance at Drury Lane Theatre for my benefit, the last but one I shall ever take in London, on Monday, July 10th.

On this occasion may I calculate upon the contribution of your valuable aid?—and, if so, will you oblige me by performing King Henry in the three first acts of King Henry VIII., and Major Oakley in *The Jealous Wife*?

I need scarcely add that I shall consider myself greatly obliged by your acquiescence in my request; but I may beg to intimate my conviction that the committee will be happy to meet your views in any arrangement you may desire.

I remain, my dear Sir,

Very faithfully yours,

S. PHELPS, ESQ.

W. C. MACREADY.

8, Canonbury Square, Islington,
June 26th, 1848.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have but this moment (four o'clock) received your note, the contents of which have afforded me great pleasure.

* Production of *Richard Cœur de Lion*, a new play by Mr. Wightwick.
—W. M. P.

I will study King Henry: Major Oakley, I believe, I *have* acted, and am most happy in being able to place my poor services at your disposal.

I am, my dear Sir,
Yours faithfully and obliged,

W. C. MACREADY, ESQ.

SAMUEL PHELPS.

5, Clarence Terrace, Regent's Park,
June 26th, 1848.

MY DEAR SIR,

I am this moment in receipt of your very kind note, and lose no time in acknowledging in the warmest manner your truly graceful and obliging manner of complying with my request. "Bis dat, qui cito dat;" and I have the most sincere pleasure in thanking you most earnestly and heartily for the very valuable service your esteemed note has rendered me.

Yours, my dear Sir,
Much obliged and very sincerely,

S. PHELPS, ESQ.

W. C. MACREADY.

21, Suffolk Street, Pall Mall East,
January 30th, 1851.

MY DEAR SIR,

Mr. Forster has communicated to me the contents of a letter received from you, in which you tell him that you will have pleasure in assisting in the performances for my parting benefit.

Let me assure you that I have been generally indifferent to the proffer of aid on this occasion; but I am sincerely gratified by the expression of such kindly sentiments *from you*, and shall be most happy in thinking you wish to be associated with my last performance, as I reflect with unmingled satisfaction on the seasons wherein your talent and services were of so much value to *me*. I have watched with great interest and pleasure the consistent and honourable course you have pursued in your own theatre, and have rejoiced in the success that has justly attended it, and the reputation it has obtained for you. You will not therefore be surprised when I assure you of the peculiar pleasure I have in thanking you for, and in accepting your services, for the night of Wednesday, February 19th.

I act Macbeth, and shall hope to see you once more resume on that evening the part of Macduff.

Believe me, my dear Sir,

Yours most sincerely,

SAMUEL PHELPS, ESQ.

W. C. MACREADY.

21, *Suffolk Street, Pall Mall East,*
February 10th, 1851.

MY DEAR MR. PHELPS,

Several persons, on the occasion of my retirement, have asked me for little professional memorials. I cannot say that I myself attach any value to these things, and probably you look on them as indifferently as I do. Regarding you, however, as my rightful successor in the part of Richelieu, I have long intended to request, when I ceased to act it, that you would wear, on the occasions of your own performance of the character, the cross of the Order of the Holy Ghost, which I have invariably used.

I must beg to use this occasion of thanking you, which I do most sincerely and earnestly, for your most kind and liberal offer of your company to perform on the night of my benefit.

I feel deeply obliged by the considerate and generous intention, and shall always retain a warm sense of the obligation.

Believe me to remain,

My dear Sir, most sincerely yours,

SAMUEL PHELPS, ESQ.

W. C. MACREADY.

8, *Canonbury Square, Islington,*
February 12th, 1851.

MY DEAR SIR,

You have given a high value to a memorial which, had it been granted at my own request, would have possessed comparatively little. My gratification at receiving it is greatly increased, too, as it gives me an opportunity of saying how much I am indebted to my four years' professional connection with you—of assuring you that the important service rendered at an eventful period of my life has never been forgotten, and that all the members of my family are likely to recollect you not only as a great actor but a good man.

That for many years you may be enabled to say "Beatus ille qui procul negotiis" is the sincere wish of,

My dear Sir,

Yours very faithfully,

W. C. MACREADY, ESQ.

SAMUEL PHELPS.

8, Canonbury Square, Islington,
July 21st, 1853.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have within these few days been inexpressibly shocked by hearing from her husband the sad recital of Mrs. Warner's sufferings in America, and her present melancholy condition. During the period of, and since, my business connection with her, I have held in the highest respect and esteem her fine womanly character; indeed, before her departure for the United States I had regarded her with almost the affection of a brother. Not until yesterday could I nerve myself to see her;—the interview I shall never forget; she looks death in the face with the meekness of a Christian and the courage of a hero—as beautiful in face as ever; talked of her approaching end without a tremor; told me what a load of parental care you had generously eased her of (God bless you for it!); then hoped that our future meetings would be regarded as preparatory of her return to America, and kept me listening more than an hour while she related anecdotes of her late experiences there.

Although she said but little on the subject, I am certain that a necessity exists for increasing her pecuniary means. A benefit night at Drury Lane instantly suggested itself to me, and I lose no time in asking your opinion on the subject, and begging also the assistance of your advice. How should it be announced to the public, &c.?

I am sure, my dear Sir, you will pardon my troubling you. Knowing somewhat of your regard for Mrs. Warner, I have not hesitated to do so. I conceive that whatever is done should take place immediately, as the London season is drawing to a close.

I hope you will not deem it an impertinence if I say how deeply I have sympathized with you under your bereavement, and that I am,

My dear Sir,

Ever gratefully and faithfully yours,

W. C. MACREADY, ESQ.

SAMUEL PHELPS.

Sherborne, Dorset, July 22nd, 1853.

MY DEAR MR. PHELPS,

I thank you most earnestly and cordially for your kind letter, for your truly friendly expressions of feeling towards myself, and for affording me the opportunity of lending my

weak co-operation to your benevolent intentions in the case of poor dear Mrs. Warner. I was not aware that there was any *immediate* pressure of pecuniary necessity, and again I thank you for apprising me of it, and most happy am I to offer such suggestions as may arise to me, and to do my little in furthering any plan you may adopt. A benefit seems the only effectual mode of collecting such an amount as would be of real service; but the time of the year is against it, as was urged by Mr. Forster in a letter to me some days ago. Still a great attraction, supporting the interest of the occasion, may—might—fill the theatre. If it could be delayed to the return of people to London, I should look to the result with greater confidence; but then there is the question, to which I could not even allude in my letters, of the probability of her life's duration. Mr. Dickens and Mr. Forster are both out of town—Mr. Forster himself ill; and in these two the most active and influential promoters of such a measure are lost to the cause. It seems to me, therefore, that in an *immediate* appeal (and every day lost now is a subtraction from the chances of success) the ground of hope is in the amount of attraction. If you could combine in a bill *all* the available names (as was done for the Shakespeare House), a short Lyceum piece, a short Adelphi piece, a Shakespearean selection, with yourself, backed by the *élite* of the Haymarket and some from the Princess's—in short, an *omnium gatherum* of theatrical talent, and what vocal aid you may be able to win over—the season of the year would not signify. But to manage this requires time, or such energy as may supply its want. Is it practicable? Actors used to be difficult of combination. I should be thankful you might find it otherwise. Would you object to form a committee of the managers of the theatres—Mr. Webster, Mr. Buckstone, Mr. C. Kean? I should question Mr. C. Matthews—or Mr. Farren. But if the three above-named would unite with you in the attempt, there would be no doubt, I should suppose, of your success. I will write by this day's post to Mr. Webster in general terms upon the subject, and endeavour to awaken his interest in it. If you and he were to address the other two, I do not think they would refuse co-operation. But pray understand that I offer these suggestions with sincere deference to your better judgment, acquainted as you must be so much better than myself with the probabilities and objections to my views. There would be no false delicacy, I am sure, on the part of Mrs. Warner to a proper appeal at the head of such an announcement, and it would be greatly to the

credit of the theatrical character to find unanimity in such a cause.

My *best interest* I am reserving to try to make it bear upon the arrangements for the children's education: but when you have decided on any step respecting this benefit you will not fail to apprise me, that I may stir the one or two friends, who may be likely to respond to my call, in its favour.

I cannot close my letter without repeating to you, my dear Sir, the satisfaction, sad as the occasion is, that I have had in hearing from you. Your feelings do you honour, and their expression gratifies me more than words can convey, in proving to me that I have not been mistaken in my estimate of your character. I hope you may find, if it should seem advisable to urge on the benefit, coadjutors worthy of you.

You are aware probably what an out-of-the-way place this is in which I live; but let me have the pleasure of adding, that if ever your journeyings should lead you sufficiently near to tempt you to make your way through it, it would afford me the *greatest gratification* to see you at my retired and old-fashioned home. Believe me to remain, with sentiments of deep regard,

Most sincerely yours,

SAMUEL PHELPS, ESQ.

W. C. MACREADY.

Sherborne House, Sherborne, Dorset,
November 16th, 1853.

MY DEAR MR. PHELPS,

Most readily will I do what you require in the case of our poor dear friend, and most heartily do I wish that it was in my power further to relieve you in those offices, which, like the good Samaritan, you leave your own business to perform for others. I write by this post to Mr. Mitchell, Mr. Webster, and Mr. Buckstone. I hope the Covent Garden and Drury Lane contributions were not paid. * * * I cannot say that I am able to regard the intervention of that lady and her husband as in any way a benefit to the necessities of poor Mrs. Warner. No subscriptions have been obtained by them that *would not have been obtained in regular course*; and their obstruction to the *benefit* has been in my judgment an *injury* that no individual exertions could compensate. I lament it most deeply as a present loss, and for the surplus it would have given to the children. Besides which, it would have been an advertisement to the subscription!—But it is gone! Should

not the furniture—or *bill of sale for the same*—be put into *your* hands, as a security for the children on their poor mother's death? You will not omit to *take care of this*.

All that you have done seems to me most right, and dictated by the most prudent and kindly spirit.

* * * * *

I am truly concerned that you should have been thus annoyed, and your time, which must be so heavily pressed upon, thus distressingly engrossed. My own subscription for Ellen Warner was stopped by the public one, and some moneys intended for me, and got by my application, paid into the general account; but I wish that were the worst to be complained of. I have no doubt Mitchell will pay over his amount, which I hope will put you at ease on the matter. Do not spare to write to me on anything that I can do to spare you pain or expedite the performance of what you may wish.

I cannot close my hasty letter without adverting to a more pleasing subject. I was *in truth* DELIGHTED to read in the *Examiner* and other papers the just tribute to your taste and skill in the production of Shakespeare's beautiful *Fairy Dream*, and the encomiums passed upon your critical and humorous representation of the *Athenian Weaver*. It gave me more pleasure than I can possibly describe to you, for I felt it was truly deserved. I have never considered the poem capable of perfect realization on the stage; but ALL that could be done with it by a poetical conception of its requirements, *you* have done. How heartily I rejoice in your success I need not add, nor how glad I was to hear of the "ragged toils," &c., at *Windsor*.

Always most sincerely yours,

SAMUEL PHELPS, ESQ.

W. C. MACREADY.

*Bonchurch, Isle of Wight,
September 27th, 1854.*

MY DEAR MR. PHELPS,

The mournful news of the release of our poor dear friend you will already have been made acquainted with; and, I fear, have been subjected to some annoyance on the matter of our late correspondence.

It is probable a letter from you may be awaiting me at home, whither I return to-morrow; but upon the receipt of this morning's intelligence I write to observe that this sad event must, I suppose, render it necessary for you to pay over the

proceeds of the benefit to Mr. Warner—to meet the expenses of the funeral, &c.

The bill of sale of the furniture belongs to the committee, and its proceeds must go to the children's support. Upon all this it will be best to have *LEGAL advice*, which * * * makes *absolutely* necessary, and therefore it becomes an expense entailed upon the Fund—not by us, but by him. You cannot be too cautious in your proceedings, and I recommend you to ask Mr. Forster and Mr. Dickens for their kind counsel to aid your own judgment; but independently of this I would have regular *professional advice* to direct and sustain us in what is to be done. I need not repeat my confidence in you, and my regret that I cannot by my presence relieve you from the annoyance of your responsibilities. Believe me to remain, my dear Mr. Phelps,

Ever your very sincere friend,

SAMUEL PHELPS, ESQ.

W. C. MACREADY.

*Sherborne House, Sherborne, Dorset,
October 20th, 1854.*

MY DEAR MR. PHELPS,

Most truly do I regret that your benevolence should have brought on you so much trouble and distress of mind as you must feel (I am sure *I* do) at being in any way concerned with affairs that are liable to interference * * *

* * * * *

All that you can do is, I take it, what *I* shall do, WASH YOUR HANDS of all matters in which — may be likely to have concern.

* * * * *

I return you your solicitor's letter (having copied it), and should recommend you to direct him to say, that Mr. Phelps and Mr. Macready have both withdrawn from the committee, declining any further concern in the late Mrs. Warner's affairs. I see no other course. Any expense that has been incurred by you in this matter I shall most gladly take my share of.

Let me now heartily (though hastily) congratulate you on the great success of your *Pericles*, which I read with great interest in the *Times*, &c., &c. *Dramatically*, I did not antici-

pate very much effect from it; but you seem to have done *all* that was to be done.

* * * * *

Earnestly hoping you will soon recover your perfect health,

I remain, my dear Mr. Phelps,

Ever yours very sincerely,

SAMUEL PHELPS, ESQ.

W. C. MACREADY.

*Sherborne House, Sherborne, Dorset,
February 8, 1857.*

MY DEAR MR. PHELPS,

The enclosed letter came here this morning. I send it to you without comment, requesting you, when you have read it, to return it to me.

I take this opportunity of expressing my most earnest hope that fortune is dealing rightly by you, and that the success of the only remaining Shakespearean Theatre is as creditable to its supporters as to its director. . . .

With my best wishes for all good to yourself and family, I remain, my dear Mr. Phelps, always most sincerely yours,

SAMUEL PHELPS, ESQ.

W. C. MACREADY.

*8, Canonbury Square,
March 6th, 1857.*

MY BEST FRIEND,

We have all been wishing nightly that we might hear from you in the morning, and now most devoutly trust that the gleam of hope afforded may be fully realized.

My son has to attend at Somerset House to-morrow with the certificate of his baptism, &c., when he will be told on what day his examination takes place. I would fain ask your advice on a matter in which I am concerned, but forbear to do so until assured that your mind is sufficiently at ease for the admission of trifles. That such may *very, very* soon be the case is the most earnest prayer of

Yours very faithfully,

W. C. MACREADY, ESQ.

SAMUEL PHELPS.

*Sherborne House, Sherborne, Dorset,
. April 27th, 1858.*

MY DEAR MR. PHELPS,

I have been solicited by a friend, whom I should be glad to serve, on behalf of a young man, a Mr. Morton Jones,

who is desirous of making the stage his profession. He has made the experiment, but I believe only as an experiment. He wishes to gain a permanent situation as Walking Gentleman.

I am sure if you can oblige me without hurting yourself (which I would on *no account* have you do) you will. I trust your son is all right, and that the world is using you as well as *you deserve*. I cannot give you a wish that I think ought to prove a happier one.

With kind regards to your family,

I am, my dear Mr. Phelps,

Always most sincerely yours,

SAMUEL PHELPS, ESQ.

W. C. MACREADY.

Sherborne, April 30th, 1858.

MY DEAR MR. PHELPS,

I send you this hasty line to assure you of my *sincere regret at your illness*, and my *heartiest wishes for your speedy and complete recovery*. Thank you *very much* for your kind attention to my request; and pray remember, that that request does not go beyond the fair balance of value and its price.

Always most cordially yours,

SAMUEL PHELPS, ESQ.

W. C. MACREADY.

*Sherborne, Dorset,
September 21st, 1859.*

MY DEAR MR. PHELPS,

You will be surprised at receiving a line from me. Indeed, my busy retirement leaves me little time for writing, or I think I *should* have scribbled *something* on the *Mammoth Humbug* that has been lately perpetrated in the testimonial to the *Mutilator* of Shakespeare, whilst the *Illustrator* and *Restorer of his text* has been neglected and ignored. But Humbug has been a god bowed down to by all nations since Adam. I hope, if I live, to see justice yet done to you.

* * * * *

I only break in upon your active work to say that I hear you have engaged a Miss Hewitt or Hart from the Princess's Theatre, and on behalf of a great friend I write to ask you to render her all the help you may be able to, consistently with the general interests of your establishment, for her advancement and improvement.

With all the best and most earnest good wishes, which when unuttered are not less truly felt, I remain,

My dear Mr. Phelps,

Always most sincerely yours,

SAMUEL PHELPS, ESQ.

W. C. MACREADY.

8, Canonbury Square,
September 26th, 1859.

MY DEAR MR. MACREADY,

I am sure you will admit "much occupation" as an excuse for my delay in replying to yours of last week. I have engaged from the Princess's Theatre a *Miss Heath*—is that the lady you mean? you appear to have written her name in doubt. I have no other lady from the same theatre, therefore conclude it must be she; but should like to be certain.

I have just entered upon the sixteenth year of my theatrical management, and begin to despair of attracting more notice than I have done—little enough, you'll say. Fear of failure, the dread of the Insolvent Court, &c., has prevented my doing what a bolder man would have done—taken a better theatre, gone into the world, and acted off the stage. I have never for one moment relaxed in my endeavours; have stuck unflinchingly to a "system"; but have found nothing increase but my expenses. I begin to fear the cause is in myself: * public opinion is said to be generally right, and I suppose I have not in me the elements to command success; nevertheless, I shall persevere to the end. I am quite sure I have done *some good*, and think I have disciplined myself to bear a good deal without grumbling.

I do not know any one thing that affords me more pleasure than a letter from you. I should frequently have written to ask your opinion or advice; but fear of intruding upon your quiet has prevented my sending letters even after they have

* Just like him: modest to a degree when speaking of himself; though no one knew better than he did how he stood with the public; but he would never parade it even to a close friend. But the non-success he hints at was of a pecuniary nature. On the opening of the theatre under his sole management—the third season—he had the boxes divided into front and back, and for the front seats (the dress circle) he charged one shilling more than for the back ones; and, as I often told him, he ought to have done the same with the pit and gallery, which would have given him £45 more per night, and then his prices, all round, would have been lower than those at the Haymarket and Princess's.—W. M. P.

been written. I sincerely hope that your health is good; and that it may continue so for many years is the earnest wish of, my dear Mr. Macready,

Yours very faithfully,

W. C. MACREADY, ESQ.

S. PHELPS.

*Sherborne, Dorset,
September 27th, 1859.*

MY DEAR MR. PHELPS,

Excuse the haste in which I write. The lady's name must be Heath. I know that my mention of her would incline the balance in her favour in any doubtful question, and I think you know I would not ask any favour incompatible with the interest of your establishment. In regard to your public career you have had to encounter an unusually energetic scheme of quackery.

* * * * *

Pray write to me whenever you think my opinion may at all be of service. I have *great* pleasure in the mere *attempt* to assist you.

It has just occurred to me, Would the production of Wallenstein serve you? If it would, I should be well content to risk its production, leaving the question of any remuneration entirely to its chance of *great* success. If it did not prove a *great* gain to the theatre, I should be content with the mere assurance that it had proved a little one to you. If it turned out a trump card, I should not decline some consideration for my labour. I think it would interest the literary and the dramatic world. Think of it. Nothing is lost if nothing comes of it.

Ever yours most sincerely,

SAMUEL PHELPS, ESQ.

W. C. MACREADY.

*6, Wellington Square, Cheltenham,
July 22nd, 1867.*

MY DEAR MR. PHELPS,

I cannot pass by the sad announcement that I read this morning in the obituary of the *Times*, without offering you the assurance of my sincere sympathy and condolence. Few friends are now left to me, and with those gone, the health which I once enjoyed has in great measure left me too. It is therefore more with sorrow than surprise that I read these mournful intimations of the mortality around us. Let me, however, at least avail myself of this melancholy opportunity

to wish you all the blessings that the world may yet have in its gift for you and yours; and believe me, my dear Mr. Phelps, to remain,

Your very true friend,

SAMUEL PHELPS, ESQ.

W. C. MACREADY.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH JOHN FORSTER.

58, *Lincoln's Inn Fields*,
Monday, July 1846.

MY DEAR SIR,

I am anxious to see your Henry IV., and though I fear I may be obliged to leave early, shall go to Sadler's Wells this evening. Will you be kind enough, if you have a private box disengaged, to allow me to occupy it? Do not trouble yourself to answer this letter. I shall take it for granted that, if able to do so, you will comply with my request.

I wish to see you in the course of the week on Sir E. B. L.'s matter.

Ever sincerely yours,

SAMUEL PHELPS, ESQ.

JOHN FORSTER.

February 20th, 1847.

MY DEAR SIR,

Now that some part of your late labours and anxieties (on the result of which I most heartily congratulate you) is over, I am anxious to have some conversation with you on one or two points that have occurred to me in connection with Sir E. B. Lytton. Time is somewhat of an object with me, and I should be obliged if you could call here on Monday, *between 11 and 12*; always supposing that it is not inconvenient for you to do so.

Yours, &c.,

JOHN FORSTER.

August 26th, 1847.

MY DEAR SIR,

Will you oblige me with a box to-night, if not inconvenient to you? I wish to see your Cymbeline.

Yours, &c.,

JOHN FORSTER.

August 28th, 1847.

MY DEAR SIR,

I cannot help troubling you with this brief word of thanks for the box you placed at my disposal the other night—that I may add how sincerely I was gratified by the presentation of *Cymbeline*. Admirable taste, as it seemed to me, and thorough knowledge of the poet's intention, were throughout apparent. I have not, for a considerable time, had so much pleasure in an English theatre. Let me add that Mr. Dickens, who accompanied me, was equally delighted with myself. I must congratulate you on your audience, too. They seem to have formed themselves into a police for security of their own enjoyment, and nothing can be more marked than their intelligent appreciation.

Yours, &c.,

JOHN FORSTER.

September 14th, 1847.

MY DEAR SIR,

You will much oblige me by placing a private box for to-night at the disposal of my young friend, Sir Edward B. Lytton's son, the bearer of this. Should this note not reach you at the theatre, I will tell him to venture to present himself with his friends at the theatre in the evening—being sure that your kindness will somehow provide for him.

Ever yours, &c.,

JOHN FORSTER.

*58, Lincoln's Inn Fields,
Saturday, October 1847.*

MY DEAR SIR,

I wish to see your *Macbeth* on Monday night, and to bring my friend Mr. Talfourd and some of his family to see it. Will you be kind enough to place a private box at my disposal for this purpose?

Yours ever, &c.,

JOHN FORSTER.

October 27th, 1847.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have received the enclosed from Sir E. B. Lytton, and think it best to send it to you.

Perhaps you would kindly have a fresh copy taken of the *Œdipus*. When you have an hour's leisure, we could then determine something finally respecting it, or resolve on the substitution of something for it.

As for what is due on *The Lady of Lyons*, I take it to be not much; but perhaps you will, at your convenience, forward it.

Mr. Greenwood's last payment to me was on the 7th January (£85 1s.—including every performance up to that day inclusive). With best wishes,

Believe me, my dear Sir, very sincerely yours,

58, *Lincoln's Inn Fields*.

JOHN FORSTER.

January 29th, 1848.

MY DEAR SIR,

I am a petitioner to your always ready kindness for a private box to-night. I wish to see *Twelfth Night* myself, and to bring Mr. Macready's son, who has never seen a Shakespeare play, to enjoy what I am sure will be an intellectual presentment of one of Shakespeare's most charming comedies.

Do not answer my note. I shall take it for granted—if I do *not* hear from you—that I may come.

Yours, my dear Sir, always most sincerely,

JOHN FORSTER.

November 4th, 1848.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have not written to you, for I hoped to have been able to go over and see you.

But you must not run wholly away from your promise to come and have a chop and a talk with me, any evening that will suit you best.

Pray write and tell me which, next week, will be most convenient. I shall be most glad to see you.

Always sincerely yours,

58, *Lincoln's Inn Fields*.

JOHN FORSTER.

November 7th, 1848.

MY DEAR SIR,

Don't forget to name some early day—you cannot say too soon—for our meeting here.

It is, however, of another matter I now write to you.

A friend, Mr. G. H. Lewes, has written to ask me so far to interest you in a play of his as to get your permission that *he may read it to you*. Any day but Thursday would suit him, and any hour. He would attend such appointment as you found it convenient to make with him, at the theatre.

May I so far trespass on your kindness, and your custom?—for I feel it would be an awkward precedent, and bring down a world of ambitious spouters on you—if ever known!

But Mr. Lewes is a very able person, certainly, and though I have not seen this play I have heard earnest accounts of it from competent people, and it may turn out to be well enough worth this trial at any rate.*

If you will say any day and hour, I will communicate it at once to Mr. Lewes, and he will be certain to wait upon you. Mr. Lewes is the author of *Ranthorpe*, and another clever novel lately published.

Yours, my dear Sir, always sincerely,

JOHN FORSTER.

November 20th, 1848.

MY DEAR SIR,

I will adopt your suggestion after all, and defer bringing my friends from to-night until *The Blot* in the *Scutcheon* is played, so shall trespass on your kindness then, instead of to-night, for a box. I have written to Mr. Lewes telling him that on finding your objections to his play went a little deeper than he informed me, I had some brief talk with you on the subject—but only on those points you mentioned to me.

Yours always sincerely,

58, *Lincoln's Inn Fields*.

JOHN FORSTER.

November 29th, 1848.

MY DEAR SIR,

Many thanks for your note. It will help me to back your suit in the matter of the play.

I am going to avail myself of your kindness to-night, and shall again see the play myself. There are very few other things going I should care to see twice—or even once.

Yours always sincerely,

JOHN FORSTER.

* This play Mr. Phelps thought little of, and he was right, as the result proved. It was produced afterwards at the Olympic, with G. V. Brooke in the principal character, and was a *dead* failure. Mr. Phelps's verdict on its merits, however, so completely wounded the *amour propre* of Lewes, poor man, that he never got over it, and as some little compensation to his own feelings (I presume) he quite ignored Mr. Phelps in his work on *Actors and the Art of Acting*, which he published in 1875.—W. M. P.

December 11th, 1848.

MY DEAR SIR,

Could you manage to give me a word as to Mr. White's play—The White Rose? I cannot help fancying there is something worth considering in that play. But if you think not, it will end a little suspense in our friend's mind, and perhaps set him to "fresh fields and pastures new," if you enable me to administer the short, sharp, final No.

Yours always most sincerely,

58, *Lincoln's Inn Fields.*

JOHN FORSTER.

March 5th, 1849.

MY DEAR SIR,

Pray write to me, or call and see me, in the course of to-morrow, Tuesday, on the subject of The Sea Captain. Sir E. B. L. has a little leisure now, when the play might be refitted if thought worth while. Should he turn to anything else it will be too late. Hence the necessity of a decision—Yes or No.

Yours always sincerely,

58, *Lincoln's Inn Fields.*

JOHN FORSTER.

October 2nd, 1849.

MY DEAR SIR,

I shall expect you on Saturday at seven; pray be punctual.

Here is a note from Mr. Leigh Hunt, which I had better forward to you. I told him of what passed between us, and this letter is his acknowledgment.

I think if you knew how important it is to him that something should be done with this play, you would possibly be able to strain a point to effect it. The strength, as I remember it, lies so much more with the Prince than with his Wife, that Miss Glyn would, in my judgment, be equal to the part.

Think it over, and do what you can. I have no fear of a result sufficiently satisfactory to justify the risk.

Sincerely yours always,

JOHN FORSTER.

October 16th, 1849. !

MY DEAR SIR,

You are reported to me as "in the bills" for Wednesday. Have you forgotten that on that day you had promised to come and eat your dinner here with me? If you still can come, I shall be most happy to see you at six; but if

any other day happens to suit you better, pray do not scruple to alter it. I have asked no one,—meaning simply that we should talk of matters to which a third person might have been an interruption; and hoping you will repeat your visit in a week or two, when Mr. Dickens is less engaged than at present, and able to join us. We saw your Leon on Saturday night, and were greatly entertained and pleased by it. I hear but moderate accounts of the Juliet on the same evening.

Yours always sincerely,

58, *Lincoln's Inn Fields.*

JOHN FORSTER.

October 24th, 1849.

MY DEAR SIR,

Most admirable in every respect was your Antony and Cleopatra, and I heartily congratulate you upon it.

Knowing how busy you have been with it, I avoided till now to act on your last note.

But now, if you can breakfast with me next Saturday at half past nine I shall be most glad. We can then discuss some matters of which I wish to speak to you, and arrange for that evening here which you owe me.

Always yours sincerely,

JOHN FORSTER.

October 31st, 1849.

MY DEAR SIR,

I send back Mr. Greenwood's letter. He seems to me to miss the point; but that is now not worth discussing. If *any* proposition could be made with a view to The Prince's Marriage (which I wish *you* would read again), or to this little comedy as an after-piece, I should be very glad. I shall in any case expect to see you, or hear from you, to-morrow.

Most sincerely yours,

58, *Lincoln's Inn Fields.*

JOHN FORSTER.

November 1st, 1849.

MY DEAR SIR,

Though I shall avail myself of your kindness at the theatre to-night, it will be necessary for me to leave the instant the play is over—if not before; and therefore I shall have no opportunity of a word with you. Hence I trouble you with this note to say that if you can favour me with a note or

a call in the course of to-morrow (or *Saturday at the latest*), in reference to Mr. Hunt's affair, I shall be very grateful to you. I am in a *mess* of promises to him.

Always yours sincerely,

58, *Lincoln's Inn Fields.*

JOHN FORSTER.

November 14th, 1849.

MY DEAR SIR,

It is with no ordinary reluctance I again write to you on the subject of Mr. Hunt. But this is the last time you will hear from me on the matter. I cannot bear to play the part of a dun to you. . . .

You must do me the justice to remember that I interfered in this matter at your own request. You had accepted Mr. Hunt's play before you called here and asked me to read it, with a view to what I should consider to be a fair offer to make to him. All that I have since done has been quite as much with a view to help you as to help Mr. Hunt in a difficulty which you do not seem to have foreseen when you originally read the play. I have now (and, as I have said, for the last time) only to state that Mr. Hunt has relied on something being done with this play; and to put it to you whether you *can* do anything, or suggest any such compromise in reference to any other play (such as Mr. Greenwood appeared to point at in his note) as may give Mr. Hunt some slight abatement of his disappointment. In any case I will most earnestly entreat you to send *a final answer*. Perhaps you will be kind enough to do so to Mr. Hunt himself, on or before Saturday next—32, Edwardes Square, Kensington? I would rather you wrote to him.

Always, my dear Sir,

Most sincerely yours,

JOHN FORSTER.

December 13th, 1849.

MY DEAR SIR,

You had not a very easy task last night, but you got through it admirably.*

But this is not what makes me trouble you so early this morning.

Mr. Dickens wants you to write a short note to him descriptive of * * *

* Production of Garcia and acting the principal character.—W. M. P.

Henry will wait until you do this. *For it is essential to be done to-day.*

Always, my dear Sir, most sincerely yours,
58, *Lincoln's Inn Fields.*

JOHN FORSTER.

MY DEAR SIR,

January 27th, 1851.

You will see by the announcement of to-day that Mr. Macready takes his farewell of the stage on 19th February.

He plays Macbeth, and I know, *for many reasons*, that it would give him peculiar pleasure if you would take part in that night's performance, and play Macduff. The purport of this note is to ask you if you will do so.

May I ask you to be so kind as to give me an answer in the course of to-morrow?

Yours ever sincerely,

JOHN FORSTER.

MY DEAR SIR,

8, *Canonbury Square, Islington,*
January 28th, 1851.

I have not seen the announcement of Mr. Macready's "farewell," or should have written him on the subject of your note. I had been much hurt indeed if not allowed to testify (in a small degree) my respect for him by assisting on that occasion. Will you say thus much, and add that I am wholly at his command?

Faithfully yours,

JOHN FORSTER, ESQ.

SAMUEL PHELPS.*

MY DEAR SIR,

January 30th, 1851.

I have communicated your note to Mr. Macready, to whom it has given real and great pleasure. He will write to you himself. Let me say also the gratification it afforded me. But I knew what your answer would be. I never doubted it for an instant.

Most sincerely yours,

JOHN FORSTER.

MY DEAR SIR,

8, *Canonbury Square, Islington,*
September 5th, 1852.

I am very unwilling to trouble you even with a question, as I know not how far you may have recovered your

* For copies of this and the three other letters from Mr. Phelps to Mr. Forster I am indebted to the kindness of Mrs. Forster.—W. M. P.

health, which I was extremely sorry to hear (while out of town) was much impaired.

To be brief, circumstances have arisen which induce me to think of speculating with Drury Lane! Give me credit for a little common-sense, and repress your inclination to exclaim.

Do you think Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton would be disposed to let me have his Greek play and Household Gods? As my proceeding in the matter (at present) depends much upon his "Aye" or "No," I shall feel greatly obliged if you will ask him the question.

I will hereafter make you acquainted with "full particulars." In the meantime rest assured that I am by no means rash.

If the state of your health will make a reply to this at all troublesome, pray dispense with it, though I sincerely hope for a speedy answer.

My dear Sir,

Faithfully yours,

JOHN FORSTER, ESQ.

SAMUEL PHELPS.

May 24th, 1855.

MY DEAR MR. PHELPS,

As soon as I got your note I felt that there was no hope, but I nevertheless sent it to Sir E. L. B.

What so completely makes it "out of the question" with him for the present did not perhaps occur to you; and you will attach to it, after all, less importance than he does, but it is certainly a bar.

* * * * *

I am sorry you should at all despond of your season and its prospects. I should hope that the evil effects of the war will somewhat abate before the time for your resuming comes.

I have been thinking over many things since I had your note, and I can really hit upon nothing that would be more worthy of all the care, knowledge, and splendour you might bestow upon it (especially in these days of wars, and battles, and soldiers, struggles and victories) than Wallenstein.

Always most truly yours,

JOHN FORSTER.

MY DEAR SIR,

8, Canonbury Square,
May 10th, 1860.

The bearer of this (my nephew) tells me it may be in your power to place him in a situation he is a candidate for, and I therefore venture to give him this introduction to your

notice, knowing him to be a young man of high character, and possessing the good opinion of all the officials connected with Bethlem Hospital.

He is one of a large family of orphans, whose education and providing for devolved upon myself and a sister. I merely mention this as a kind of apology for soliciting your kind interference in his behalf, as you see a sort of fatherly duty induces me to make this effort—it is an effort to ask a great favour without right or claim to do so. I feel assured, however, that you will pardon me, and I am,

My dear Sir,

Yours very faithfully,

JOHN FORSTER, ESQ.

S. PHELPS.

P.S.—I have left my nephew to state his own case.*

MY DEAR MR. PHELPS,

46, *Montagu Square, W.*,
May 12th, 1860.

You can make no application to me which I should not heartily wish and endeavour to second by all the means in my power.

I have seen your nephew, whose manner and address seem to justify in all respects the high opinion expressed of him.

I have explained the difficulties of my position in reference to appointments connected with such institutions; but within the limits of what I can do (and which he seems quite to understand), rely upon my leaving nothing undone to try and serve him.

With best wishes, *and all the old esteem and regard*, believe me always, my dear Mr. Phelps,

Most truly yours,

S. PHELPS, ESQ.

JOHN FORSTER.

MY DEAR MR. FORSTER,

8, *Canonbury Square*,
May 17th, 1860.

I beg you will excuse my delay in thanking you most gratefully for your kind note of the 12th. My nephew, I am sure, whatever may be its result, will ever remember strongly his interview with you.

Yours very faithfully,

JOHN FORSTER, ESQ.

S. PHELPS.

* The nephew here referred to is my brother.—W. M. P.

LETTERS FROM THE REV. JAMES WHITE.

MY DEAR SIR,

The good opinion of The Earl of Gowrie expressed by so competent a judge and excellent a performer as Mr. Phelps is highly flattering to my vanity as an author. But I think it is best to explain to him at once the circumstances in my position that make me decline accepting his obliging offer to bring it out at Sadler's Wells. Mr. Macready has expressed a very high opinion of another play which I sent him on hearing how much The Earl of Gowrie had pleased him, and he has (I believe) arranged for its production during this season, taking the principal character himself. I think it would not be acting towards him with the friendship that his great kindness to me deserves, if I were to connect myself with another theatre during my connection with the Princess's. Will you forward the substance of this to Mr. Phelps?—and assure him that if I had had it in my power, nothing would have been more pleasing to me than to have aided his and Mrs. Warner's noble efforts in behalf of the legitimate drama.

Believe me, my dear Sir,

Yours very truly,

JOHN FORSTER, ESQ.

JAMES WHITE.

Monday morning, February 2nd, 1846.

DEAR SIR,

*Erechtheum Club, St. James's Square,
November 27th, 1846.*

As my friend Mr. Forster refers you to me on the subject of my tragedy of the Feudal Times, I shall be glad if you will appoint a time and place where we can meet to-morrow. I can either receive you here, or, as I am probably the idler man, I can come to you at the theatre or anywhere else at whatever hour suits you best.

I remain, your obedient servant,

SAMUEL PHELPS, ESQ.

JAMES WHITE.

MY DEAR SIR,

*Bonchurch, Isle of Wight,
December 9th, 1846.*

I enclose you a letter from my friend, Mr. Roberts [David Roberts, R.A.], respecting scenery and costume, from which you will perceive his friendship in the cause of Feudal

Times. Have you got it copied yet? If you have not yet despatched it to Mr. Forster, it will be better to put it in a brown paper envelope and send it to me as a parcel here. I will then add a preface, and get ready for the printer. I shall always be glad to hear what progress you are making in the distribution of the parts; and should be very glad to hear at what time you can put it in rehearsal. I do not go to London till the end of this month.

Believe me, my dear Sir,

Yours very truly,

SAMUEL PHELPS, ESQ.

JAMES WHITE.

*Bonchurch, Isle of Wight,
December 21st, 1846.*

MY DEAR SIR,

I send you some extracts from Pinkerton (whom Walter Scott calls "this very accurate historian"), which may be useful for the costumes of Feudal Times. The only other points I glean are that the shoes were broad-pointed, the armour *plate*, and that James III. was the first who put the unicorn into the Royal Arms. Did you ever hear of the picture at Kensington? Crimson gowns with satin stomachers lined with ermine seems to have been the dress of noble ladies.

Believe me, my dear Sir,

Yours very truly,

SAMUEL PHELPS, ESQ.

JAMES WHITE.

*Erechtheum Club, St. James's Square,
December 29th, 1846.*

MY DEAR SIR,

I am now settled in London for three months, and shall be ready to put my shoulder to the wheel of Feudal Times as soon as possible. As Islington is so far off, will you let me know by a Queen's head addressed to this club whether I shall find you at the theatre on Wednesday or Thursday, and at what hour?

Meantime, believe me

Yours very truly,

SAMUEL PHELPS, ESQ.

JAMES WHITE.

3, *Upper George Street, Montagu Square,*
January 2nd, 1847.

MY DEAR SIR,

I am very sorry to discover by your note of to-day the cause of your absence from the bills;—so that you maintain an equal absence from those of mortality all will be well; and I trust next week will see you yourself again.

The above is my address for three months; and as you are getting on with the arrangements for the Feudal Times, I will not intrude on your convalescence until I see that you are in full possession of the stage again.

I propose on Tuesday or Wednesday to bring my wife and two little girls to see the play and pantomime; and perhaps we can have a few minutes' conversation after the play.

In the meantime, believe me,

My dear Sir, yours very truly,

SAMUEL PHELPS, ESQ.

JAMES WHITE.

3, *Upper George Street, Montagu Square,*
January 5th, 1847.

MY DEAR SIR,

To-day is so mild that I intend to bring my party (of four) to see *The Lady of Lyons* and the pantomime; and as I now consider myself a portion of the Sadler's Wells company, venture to ask you for a private box (if disengaged).

Yours very truly,

SAMUEL PHELPS, ESQ.

JAMES WHITE.

MY DEAR SIR,

January 6th, 1847.

I saw Mr. Roberts to-day. He has fortunately got a sketch of the oldest part of Holyrood, and says there will be no difficulty in devising the Abbot's Lodge in which it was the custom of the kings to reside. The Royal Palace was in the Castle. The principal features to be presented are, I should think, the bold outline of Arthur's Seat, which, you remember, bounds the Park in which the Lords have their consultations and the banner scene of the third act occurs—the massive style of the houses in the Canongate, and probably the great grey old Castle at the west end of the scene. As Mr. Roberts knows the character of the scenery at Lauder, he may give hints for the fifth act; but whatever he can do I know he will, for my sake, and also for that of the Legitimate. Last night gave me

great hopes, although I don't think The Lady of Lyons qualified to give a very just view of the powers of your company. I feel sure Miss Laura Addison will do excellent well in Margaret.

Mr. Roberts will be glad to see your painter any time on Friday next between ten and three at 7, Fitzroy Street. I am always at your summons addressed to Upper George Street.

Yours very truly,

SAMUEL PHELPS, ESQ.

JAMES WHITE.

MY DEAR PHELPS,

3, Upper George Street,
February 21st, 1847.

I cannot resist the temptation of thanking you for the great pleasure your admirable acting gave me last night. You presented a noble embodiment of the hero; and, in short, the completeness of the whole play makes me feel equally obliged to you in your character of intellectual artist and tasteful manager. Let this suffice. I am not given to flummery, and therefore I hope you will value my thanks as something more than words of course.

My wife wishes to take some friends on Wednesday. The large box next the stage will do, which I believe you can spare more easily than any other. Will you write "Yes" or "No" (as I know you are no great scribe) that she may fix the day for her friends—three ladies besides herself?

To-morrow or next day we meditate a call at No. 8, as Mrs. White is anxious to make Mrs. Phelps's acquaintance.

Ever yours most truly,

S. PHELPS, ESQ.

JAMES WHITE.

MY DEAR PHELPS,

March 5th, 1847.

In the effort of Cockerising our arrangement of to-day, I trust I made it clear that Dickens and Forster are coming with me on Monday. Let us have the private box farthest from the stage, and be on your mettle.

Yours ever,

S. PHELPS, ESQ.

JAMES WHITE.

MY DEAR PHELPS,

March 30th, 1847.

I enclose you a formal acceptance of your offer for my play of John Savile, and only hope he will equal your expectations when you put him on the boards. The conduct

of Mr. Macready has been most liberal and friendly throughout, and so also has been Mr. Forster's.

I had some conversation with the latter last night after the General Theatrical Fund Dinner, and he thinks that if you feel confident of a portrait success in James, and the *dénouement* is judiciously altered, that it would be quite safe to proceed as we had proposed with The Earl of Gowrie in the meantime. I myself have no doubt of your making a hit, and it only lies with you to decide whether its general merits as a play are likely to insure a success, which, by keeping me favourably before the public, might benefit the tragedy in September. Will you think over this? Give the play (The Earl of Gowrie) a careful reading, and let me know the result. I confess a *penchant* (if you think any play would be useful in that respect) for Flattery's Fool; for, being of a different kind, a comparative failure would not damage any reputation the Feudal Times has established in the "serious line." I go home to-morrow to Bonchurch, where I hope you will write to me.

I propose to run up again on 7th April; but a line from you will bring me up to a certainty.

Remember us very kindly to Mrs. Phelps.

S. PHELPS, ESQ.

Ever yours truly,

JAMES WHITE.

Bonchurch, June 25th, 1847.

MY DEAR PHELPS,

The health of my eldest daughter has given us great uneasiness, and though she is now better, the doctors insist on my giving her two months of health-seeking among the Scottish hills; so in about ten days she and my wife and I begin our summer wanderings, from which I fear I cannot return before the end of August. Before that time you will have commenced the rehearsals of John Savile.

Will you let me know by a letter addressed here at what time you propose to open?

It will be a great favour also, if you will tell me whether you have made any alterations in your company—and what they are,—for in case of any inspiration from the mountain air (not forgetting the dew of the same region) information on this point would be very useful.

Ever yours, dear Phelps, truly,

S. PHELPS, ESQ.

JAMES WHITE.

P.S.—I hope you are giving Mrs. Phelps (to whom we beg our

c c

compliments) and the children change of air, and that you yourself are getting refreshed as a giant to run your course.

MY DEAR PHELPS,

*Moffat, Dumfriesshire,
August 11th, 1847.*

After six weeks' wanderings among hills and heather we are so far on our way home. In such an out-of-the-way spot as this we hear nothing of the gay world of St. James's, or the dramatic world of Sadler's Wells. Will you enlighten my ignorance on the latter subject by a note addressed to the Erechtheum Club, which I hope to reach on 16th inst.?

* * * * *

When do you expect to make your bow as John Savile?

With best regards to Mrs. Phelps,

Yours ever, &c.,

S. PHELPS, ESQ.

JAMES WHITE.

MY DEAR PHELPS,

*3, Upper George Street,
August 31st, 1847.*

I have secured this house only for another fortnight.

For how many weeks should I require to take it beyond that time, to enable my people to see the production of John Savile? Is it certain to come out not later than the first week in October?

Pray answer this, as you will see it is of consequence.

Ever yours truly,

S. PHELPS, ESQ.

JAMES WHITE.

MY DEAR PHELPS,

October 11th, 1847.

I enclose (with many thanks) a formal receipt for the £100, which I would have done earlier this morning if I had had a stamp of the proper amount.

I hope to bring my wife and daughter to the Macbeth to-morrow night, and there is some plan of a joint visit by her and Mrs. Dickens when it is acted next week.

Meantime I am laying in *a stock of tripe and cow-heel* for the supper of the 27th.

I shall see you at rehearsal on Thursday, and till then remain, as ever, yours very truly,

S. PHELPS, ESQ.

JAMES WHITE.

*Bonchurch, Isle of Wight,
October 27th, 1847.*

MY DEAR PHELPS,

I arrived here yesterday, and find I have so much to do after four months' absence, that unless you particularly need me for rehearsal on Tuesday, I should not like to leave home till Thursday or Friday next week. Will you let me know if the two new scenes were what you wanted, and whether my presence on Tuesday is indispensable? My daughter is not so well.

Believe me, yours very truly,

JAMES WHITE.

Bonchurch, October 29th, 1847.

MY DEAR PHELPS,

I have perfect confidence in your theatrical judgment, but feel so strongly about the proposed alteration of the end of the fourth act (which I had considered the best point in the play) that I hope some other means may be devised to enable us to retain it.

The story of Savile's getting into Lilian's room is, that aided by Epslie (who had of course the *entrée* as Buckingham's confidant, and, in this instance, the fictitious chaplain) he got in without resistance from the Duke's attendants.

* * * * *

This or something like it I hold to be very essential to the progress of the story. But as conversation may help us, I will run up to-morrow, and see you on Sunday at twelve or one o'clock at Canonbury Square. If I miss you there, at all events on Monday at rehearsal at eleven.

Believe me, always yours very truly,

JAMES WHITE.

*Bonchurch, Isle of Wight,
November 21st, 1847.*

MY DEAR PHELPS,

I am pleased to hear that the play goes even better than I expected, and that the houses (considering weather and the monetary crisis) are reasonably good. I wish they were crammed to the ceiling for your sake, particularly as it would make my application to you more tolerable. If you can spare * * * *

I intend to run up to London for the Shakespeare Fund night, though I must say I should have liked the stars to have

made a constellation in one play instead of each taking a little bit of heaven to himself.

I hope you are all well. My little invalid has shaken off her attack, and has now only weakness to contend with, and the doctors speak confidently of recovery.

Ever yours,

JAMES WHITE.

*Bonchurch, Isle of Wight,
November 24th, 1847.*

MY DEAR PHELPS,

I can most truly condole with you on the short life (which is certainly not a merry one) of John Savile, for I suspect it will eventually be a greater loss to me than to you. On Friday, have the kindness to gratify the twopenny postman in the pit by changing the speech about the names to "They said they would return,—those gentlemen?"

If Mr. Greenwood will pay the money into the Commercial Bank, 6, Henrietta Street, at once, it will be a great favour, as I have an account to pay which I have promised to do on Saturday.

I really hope your *As You Like It* will fill the exchequer which I have been the means of emptying.* My informants of its success, "*excellent houses*," were David Roberts and Mr. Forster,—I was quite delighted; and now comes your letter like the . . . to keep my buds from blowing. New plays don't seem successful anywhere this season, and I am afraid from the *Times* report of Philip V. Artevelde that he is no exception. Well, I had once hopes of making something of the Drama, but I fear that is over. You will probably think you have had enough of me, and I must therefore carry my pigs—White Roses—to another market.†

I was sorry to hear of the illness in your house.

* * * * *

If I do *not* hear from you, I will draw on the bank on Saturday in the confidence the money will be paid in.

Ever yours truly,

JAMES WHITE.

* This only lasted a night or two. John Savile drew good houses afterwards.—W. M. P.

† See Appendix.

LETTERS FROM CHARLES DICKENS.

*Broadstairs, Kent,
August 29th, 1847.*

MY DEAR SIR,

I cannot resist the impulse I feel to thank you for the very great pleasure I derived from the representation of *Cymbeline* at your theatre on Thursday night. The excellent sense, taste, and feeling manifested throughout; the great beauty of all the stage arrangements; and the respectful consideration (so to speak) shown by every one concerned, for the creation of the poet, gave me extraordinary gratification. Nor could I readily express to you, if I were to try, how strong a sense I have of the great service such a theatre renders to all who visit it, and to the general cause of Literature and Art.

Even at the risk of seeming to intrude this sense upon you, I really cannot help assuring you of my warm interest and admiration. And perhaps you will receive my note with the greater favour, when I confess to having resisted a similar impulse after several former visits to Sadler's Wells, in my unwillingness to trouble you.

Let me hope that I may have the pleasure of associating my public knowledge of you with a more private and personal one than hitherto when I return to town in October; and believe me, my dear Sir,

Faithfully yours,

SAMUEL PHELPS, ESQUIRE.

CHARLES DICKENS.

*Broadstairs, Kent,
September 21st, 1847.*

MY DEAR SIR,

I have received your letter with very great pleasure. I had anticipated, in my own mind, the occasion of my not hearing from you—with a misgiving that I had not given you at all clearly to understand my whereabouts—and therefore was in no surprise, and should have had the satisfaction of calling upon you on my return to town. Which I still promise to myself; not the less agreeably, you may suppose, for the kind and welcome assurance you give me in your note.

My dear Sir, faithfully yours,

S. PHELPS, ESQUIRE.

CHARLES DICKENS.

1, *Devonshire Terrace*,
Tuesday Evening, October 5th, 1847.

MY DEAR SIR,

Mr. and Mrs. White are coming to dine with us on Sunday at six o'clock, to dispose of a haunch of venison that has arrived to-day. If you should have no better engagement, and would take your seat at our family table, both Mrs. Dickens and I would be cordially glad to see you.

My dear Sir, faithfully yours,

S. PHELPS, ESQUIRE.

CHARLES DICKENS.

Devonshire Terrace,
Wednesday Evening.

MY DEAR SIR,

The Reverend James White is coming here to-night to learn the fate of his play; and I believe two friends of his are coming too. For whose consolation a lobster and a glass of wine will be awaiting our return. If you should not be too fatigued, and would assist me to make the Reverend J. W. miserable, by describing the progress of the evening, I should be glad to carry you home here, and would wait until you had exchanged the garments of John Savile for your own. In that case, will you send some one round to me, merely to say "Wait?" I need not observe that no dressing is necessary for such a refection, and that we have not the least idea of sitting late. But the smallest congratulation would be so incomplete without you—or the smallest condolence either, in which you decidedly have a just share—that I hope I shall take you prisoner in virtue of this warrant. Believe me, very faithfully yours,

SAMUEL PHELPS, ESQUIRE.

CHARLES DICKENS.

Tavistock House,
February 25th, 1854.

MY DEAR SIR,

You will not have to pull down that wall. I am sorry to inform you that the difficulties in the way of the Queen's coming to Sadler's Wells are unsurmountable. But a very just reference is made to you and the theatre in Colonel Phipps's letter.

Will you come here to-morrow an hour before dinner—that is to say, at five—and let us again review the circumstances?

* * * * *

Faithfully yours always,

SAMUEL PHELPS, ESQUIRE.

CHARLES DICKENS.

*Tavistock House,
December 11th, 1854.*

MY DEAR MR. PHELPS,

Mrs. Martin immediately sent the play to Buckstone. I immediately wrote to Buckstone as you and I agreed. Buckstone immediately wrote to me, to ask to hold the question over until his pantomime is out, he being in a dismal condition of environment by fairies and carpenters. To that reasonable entreaty I replied with amiability, and he will come to me when his holiday ship is fairly afloat. You shall, of course, hear from me in due course, without delay.

I want you to do my children a kindness for their little Christmas play. Will you ask your prompter to lend me your prompt-book of *Fortunio*, and a piano copy of its music, if you have such a thing?

Very faithfully yours,

SAMUEL PHELPS, ESQUIRE.

CHARLES DICKENS.

*Tavistock House,
January 7th, 1855.*

MY DEAR MR. PHELPS,

Buckstone has redeemed his promise, and has read and carefully considered Mr. Saunders's play. I have both heard from him and seen him on the subject; and he is quite willing to do it at the Haymarket, *if* all questions of cost can be adjusted with a reasonable reference to the depth of his purse.

He would prefer to bring it out immediately after Easter. I want your reply to two questions. Firstly, would your arrangements admit of your appearing at the Haymarket, say on Saturday the 14th of April?—and secondly, on what terms would you go there? If you will give me your reply on these points, I will communicate it to Buckstone: with whom (of course) I hold any such communication in confidence. In the meantime I consider nothing in reference to the play changed, and regard it still under your acceptance.

Always very faithfully yours,

SAMUEL PHELPS, ESQUIRE.

CHARLES DICKENS.

*Hôtel Maurice, Paris,
February 13th, 1855.*

MY DEAR MR. PHELPS,

I left town on Sunday on a ten days' or fortnight's visit to France, and had not had time to write a line to you.

A note I received from Buckstone a day or two before I came away leads me to infer that some communication had taken

place between you and him on the subject of Mr. Saunders's play: and that you knew before I did, that Mrs. Martin's arrangements could not be made to tally with yours, and that the Haymarket project could not be carried out.

What I wish to communicate to you in this condition of the matter is, that I will see Mr. Saunders as soon as I return, and immediately afterwards convey to you his wishes as to the play's remaining in your hands. There has not been the least delay on our side. Buckstone's note, to which I have referred, was in answer to one of mine, urging him to report progress.

The Exhibition building is fast approaching to completion here, and great things are expected in the way of a prodigious influx of visitors. If Mitchell carries out the idea you mentioned to me, and if it be well executed, I imagine that an English theatre will be a hit. All the French theatres are at work as usual, and everybody seems to go to all of them, though the snow lies thick and the cold is severe. What a model people!

Faithfully yours,

SAMUEL PHELPS, ESQUIRE.

CHARLES DICKENS.

*Tavistock House,
April 5th, 1855.*

MY DEAR MR. PHELPS,

After some difficulty, I am assured that matters are now arranged between Mrs. Martin and Mr. Buckstone for the production of Mr. Saunders's play. I therefore think it right immediately to relieve you of any further trouble in the matter, and to withdraw the play from your hands agreeably to the understanding between us.

Always faithfully yours,

SAMUEL PHELPS, ESQUIRE.

CHARLES DICKENS.

*Tavistock House, London,
April 12th, 1855.*

MY DEAR MR. PHELPS,

I have throughout been quite sensible (and so, I am sure, has Mr. Saunders), that you have done everything you reasonably could to advance the prospects of Love's Martyrdom. Pray believe that throughout these negotiations I have not for a moment thought otherwise.

Very faithfully yours,

SAMUEL PHELPS, ESQUIRE.

CHARLES DICKENS.

*Tavistock House,
March 24th, 1857.*

MY DEAR MR. PHELPS,

Can you come and join our family dinner (we shall be perfectly alone) on Sunday at five? If this proposal should not be convenient to you, I should be happy to see you on Saturday at half-past two. I should prefer the former appointment, as it would enable us to discuss our subject at the fireside after dinner, but I suggest two opportunities of meeting, in order that the end may be more readily brought about.

Write me a word in answer, and I shall expect you according to your reply.

Always faithfully yours,

SAMUEL PHELPS, ESQUIRE.

CHARLES DICKENS.

*Garrick Club,
June 12th, 1857.*

MY DEAR PHELPS,

Let me call your attention to the accompanying proof. It is the wish of the Committee that it should be left to speak for itself.

I am not wrong, I believe, in having taken upon myself to say that I was certain your co-operation may be counted on, on the occasion against which I have set a mark?*

Faithfully yours always,

SAMUEL PHELPS, ESQUIRE.

CHARLES DICKENS.

*Gallery of Illustration,
June 19th, 1857.*

DEAR SIR,

We beg to inform you that we have taken the liberty of adding your name to this Committee,* in the full assurance that you would readily extend that sanction and support to the object in view.

We are, dear Sir, faithfully yours,

CHARLES DICKENS,

SAMUEL PHELPS, ESQ.

ARTHUR W. W. SMITH.

In Remembrance of the late Mr. Douglas Jerrold.

*Committee's Office, Gallery of Illustration,
Regent Street, July 2nd, 1857.*

MY DEAR PHELPS,

We shall not have above twenty people on the Queen's night, but I have managed to lay violent hands on

* *Re* the fund to be raised in remembrance of the late Mr. Douglas Jerrold.—W. M. P.

these two cards for yourself and Mrs. Phelps. Observe the directions as to time.

Faithfully yours always,

CHARLES DICKENS.

MY DEAR PHELPS,

*Office of "All the Year Round,"
May 27th, 1863.*

I have an engagement at twelve to-day, to go to Limehouse with Mr. Edwin Chadwick to inspect some schools. I therefore leave for you enclosed, agreeably to your request, the four letters from Mr. Fechter to yourself which you left in my hands.

Faithfully yours always,

SAMUEL PHELPS, ESQ.

CHARLES DICKENS.

LETTERS FROM LEIGH HUNT.

*Kensington,
Oct. 1st, 1849.*

MY DEAR FORSTER,

I am very glad of what you tell me respecting Sadler's Wells.

I am quite aware of the many perplexities that beset managers; have a special sense of what is due to those who make such intelligent and praiseworthy efforts to uphold the poetic drama; and important as profits are to me, . . . am the last man in the world to make arrangements difficult in regard to money matters. It is a pure matter of justice that they ought to be squared to the manager's receipts. But what I am most anxious about is, that a conclusion of some kind be come to respecting the actual appearance of the play. I have been the more sorry at not seeing or hearing further of Mr. Phelps, because I took a liking to him at our interview, both on his own account and the piece's, and was glad to think that he would be the hero of it. He had both the look and the tones of the man, who could at one time play the loving husband, and at another send forth the avenging voice to his armies.

But speed—speed—is what I want. Say this word more for me, my dear, kind friend, who takes so much trouble for me; and believe me,

Your ever affectionate friend,

LEIGH HUNT.

*Kensington,
Tuesday, Nov. 21st, 1849.*

DEAR SIR,

There is a stage from this place to Islington at half past one; so that I propose, if not inconvenient to you, to come to-morrow by that; which will probably bring me to your door by half past two, or thereabouts. If I do not, therefore, hear from you to the contrary, you will be good eno' to look for me accordingly.

Your most obedient, humble servant,
S. PHELPS, ESQ. LEIGH HUNT.

*Kensington,
Nov. 28th, 1849.*

MY DEAR SIR,

It has struck me that you might like to have a little more time with my play; if so, pray take it.

I happen just now to be at a juncture with my little fortunes, in which they are on the point, either of re-emerging finally into light, * * * * * and this naturally makes me anxious; but there are perils in precipitation as well as in delay; and for my own sake,—which I hope includes yours also,—I would fain encounter neither.

With a very pleasant recollection of our interview,

I am, my dear Sir, sincerely yours,

SAMUEL PHELPS, ESQ. LEIGH HUNT.

P.S.—Should your son call again, I should be happy to see him in the evening instead of the morning if the former would be more convenient to him. Either time suits me; but the case may be otherwise with him. Tea would be ready for him at any hour; and as the night air at present is hurtful to me, I am sure to be at home.

*Kensington,
April 25th, 1850.*

MY DEAR SIR,

I do not at all wish to take the play out of your hands. I am heartily content to see it in them. I only thought, that if you could do nothing with it, somebody else might. I wished but to see it moving somehow, or promising to move.

Perhaps you will have the goodness to write me one word

more, just to say when your next season commences, and at what period of it you propose to bring out the play.

With kindest respects, very truly yours,

SAMUEL PHELPS, ESQ.

LEIGH HUNT.*

LETTERS FROM SIR E. BULWER LYTTON.

1846.

DEAR SIR,

I forgot to say that Mercadante wished to know whether there would be what he calls a full orchestra,—or a half one. Let me know as soon as possible. Better state of what instruments you will compose the orchestra.

I am obliged to send him my copy of the play—can you at leisure let me have another?

I was much delighted last night—actors, audience, getting up, and all. Miss A—— has *power* and *stuff* in her. But she wants teaching. Articulation is defective.

Yours in haste,

S. PHELPS, ESQ.

E. B. L.

MY DEAR FORSTER,

Will you kindly get from Mr. Phelps the copy he took from my *Œdipus*? I want to look over it, and have no other copy, Mercadante not having returned the one I sent him.

At the same time will you remind Mr. Phelps that there is a sum due to me for *The Lady of Lyons*?

Excuse this trouble, and believe me truly yours,

E. B. LYTTON.

*Feuillades Hotel,
February 23rd, 1847.*

* The new play referred to in the foregoing letters was never produced, but on 22nd August, 1850, Mr. Hunt's play of *The Legend of Florence*, originally produced by Madame Vestris at Covent Garden some ten years before, was reproduced by Mr. Phelps with great success, and had a good run.—W. M. P.

MY DEAR FORSTER,

Many thanks to Mr. Phelps and yourself. But at this time it is out of the question for me to bring out any play not already on the boards.

Yours truly,
E. B. LYTTON.

*Park Lane,
Monday, May 1855.*

MY DEAR SIR,

I am much flattered by your obliging letter. I have no intention, however, of placing on the stage either the *Cædipus* or the *Lucretia*.

I have by me, as you, I think, are aware, the romantic play in five acts remodelled from *The Sea Captain*. But it contains too many leading parts to be safely produced at present.

My attention is not much attracted towards the stage now. But if any subject containing effective situations occurs to yourself, oblige me by suggesting it, and I will give it consideration.

I believe nothing more assists an author for dramatic composition than the hints of an accomplished actor as to effect and situation, which the author can then harmonize to plot and develop through character. And perhaps every eminent actor sees his way to certain novel triumphs in his art, which he could realize if he could get them placed in dramatic form.

Yours truly,
E. B. LYTTON.

S. PHELPS, ESQ.

*15, Royal Crescent, Bath,
Nov. 20th, 1863.*

P.S.—I think a play of poetical or classic interest in three acts might be made more forcible than five.

LETTER FROM G. H. BOKER.

MR. SAMUEL PHELPS,

*Philadelphia,
September 1st, 1850.*

DEAR SIR,

A few weeks ago I had the pleasure of receiving an acting copy of my tragedy of *Calaynos*, which you did me the

honour of producing with such distinguished success at your theatre.

Upon reviewing the acting copy I was of course struck with the alterations which had been made at the conclusion of the play; but upon the whole think them very judicious for acting purposes. Within a few days the idea has occurred to me of re-writing the fifth act, at the same time preserving the *dénouement* which you gave to it. Enclosed you will find the fruits of my labour, which you will be kind enough to use, if you should ever reproduce the play. My only objection to your conclusion of Calaynos is entirely of a private nature. My new play, *The Betrothal*, which is about to be produced in Philadelphia, concludes with a banquet scene; and therefore resembles the acting copy of Calaynos too nearly for my comfort. This is the more perplexing to me, as the manager, Mr. Marshall, insists on producing Calaynos immediately after *The Betrothal*, provided the latter should be successful. Thus you perceive I will have two plays running at the same house, and both concluding with a banquet.

To return to Calaynos. If I judge rightly, the second scene of Act V. is what is called "a carpenter's scene"; and therefore you must have it, in order to set your last scene behind it. At the best it must seem like an intrusion, as the action of the play is suspended by it. The *Athenæum* says that this scene "perilled the success of the tragedy on its original production," and with great justice, I think. In the last scene I have introduced a song, which has a strong bearing on the catastrophe, and if sung well, might be introduced with considerable effect—provided music has the same power over an English audience that it has over an American. I should advise that the music of the first three lines be of a light, merry kind, concluding with a slow, heavy movement in the fourth line.

I am sorry to have troubled you with all this matter about a play which you may have considered shelved long ago; but really I could not bear to see a play, supposed to have been written by me, with so much of another man's material in it. For my own satisfaction, the play, conclude as it may, must be in my language.

Have you seen my second play, *Anne Boleyn*, which has been published some months? It strikes me that it might be used with effect as a play for the holidays, being full of spectacle. You can probably procure a copy of John Chapman in the Strand.

My last play, *The Betrothal*, which I wrote entirely for the

stage, has not been published, as we American authors lose all control over the production of our plays after they have been published.

If you should reproduce Calaynos with my alterations, will you be good enough to let me know of it?

In the meantime, I remain,

Your obedient servant,

MR. SAMUEL PHELPS,
London.

G. H. BOKER.

MISCELLANEOUS LETTERS.

*Westminster,
Monday Night, February 17th, 1851.*

MY DEAR SIR,

Permit me to thank you for adding another to the list of Shakespearean treats your theatre has afforded me, and which constitutes a very dearly cherished item in my pleasures of memory. I have seen your Hamlet this evening for the first time; and for the first time have I seen the mind of that noble and exquisite creation embodied and rendered palpable to the eye and heart of the spectator. I have seen several stage Hamlets, but never Shakespeare's till now. So fresh, so new, so clear is your portraiture that I could not avoid troubling you with the expression of my pleasure and my obligation. I am ignorant of Mr. Charles Kemble's Hamlet; but nobody since his time has made us feel, as you do, Hamlet's grief, his filial love—in all its depth and fulness—and the exquisite refinement and spirituality of his character. These are so finely expressed that the agony of his situation and the utter repugnance of its requirements to his nature are intensely felt throughout the play. Moreover, the real worshippers of Shakespeare owe you a world of thanks for giving them a performance free from stage quackeries and conventional tricks. It is inexpressibly refreshing to see the forms and dictates of simple nature so faithfully adhered to. Nothing can surpass the beauty and affecting power of the chamber scene with the Queen—so new in style, yet so simple and truthful, but so tremendous in effect. Never have I witnessed that scene before without a wretched violation of all truth, propriety, and force, in order that the Queen shall throw herself into the arms of Hamlet (who is

obviously preparing himself for the event) for the purpose of making a stage tableau. I must tell you also that I felt convinced this evening that had the stage exhibited in former times any such plain and obvious interpretation of the story and character of Hamlet as yours, the many disquisitions and squabbles about Hamlet's consistency and madness would never have arisen. Doubtless a careful study of the text and of human nature will always settle the point; but the *text in action*, and intellectually rendered, conveys the truth more rapidly and forcibly.

Miss Glyn's performance is, as usual, good, and full of intelligence.

The strong sentiment of grief in the Ghost's (Mr. H. Marston's) tone, and the *expressive* instead of the *monotonous* reading usually employed, struck me as a great improvement.

There is nothing new in saying that ghosts never knew how to vanish till they learned to do so at Sadler's Wells. You have taught managers the use of darkness.

I see your benefit is announced for Thursday week, and wish the house was three times larger for that occasion, for I am sure it would be filled. That you will have "a bumper" there is no doubt, and I hope nothing will prevent me from being one of the drops in the overflowing goblet on that occasion. I am speculating on what the revival may be.

I hope you will excuse this trespass on your time, from one who almost regards Shakespeare as a second Deity, and an honest interpreter of him as one of the dearest ornaments to intellectual society. Believe me, my dear Sir, with all sincerity and admiration, yours,

SAMUEL PHELPS, ESQ.

W. M. WHITNEY.

P.S.—I much regret that the retirement of my uncle from the editorship of the *Morning Advertiser* causes me to lose the occasional opportunity of paying a public tribute of praise to your establishment.

London, December 18th, 1851.

SIR,

Last night I went to Sadler's Wells for the purpose of witnessing your Sir Pertinax Macsycophant. I have been a regular play-goer for the past fifteen years—seen all the best actors and plays; but, Sir, I unhesitatingly say, that your performance yesterday evening was incomparably the *greatest* I have

ever witnessed; and I hasten to congratulate you upon the great acquisition you have made to your *répertoire*.

Your obedient servant,

SAMUEL PHELPS, ESQ.

A SCOTCHMAN.

*Scottish Society and Hanover Park Club,
Peckham, January 6th, 1852.*

SIR,

Several members of this Society and Club have witnessed the revival of *The Man of the World* at Sadler's Wells with much satisfaction, more especially your admirable personification of their countryman, Sir Pertinax Macsycophant, so truly, so broadly, and so correctly given, without any tinge of provincialism. They consider it due to you to express their admiration of your performance, on which the main strength lies, and of the most efficient and correct manner in which the whole performance is sustained by every performer. In conveying, as requested, this expression of feeling from a body of Scotchmen, I can add personally that I have had the gratification of seeing the late tragedian Cooke, and also the respected Charles Young, once the Polar star of your profession, perform Sir Pertinax, and it is no reflection on them to say that you excel them both. There is much difficulty in an Englishman grasping the Scottish dialect and guttural pronunciation: these you master, and show to the life a Scotchman thirty years domiciled in England. Some words form exceptions, such as "thinking," "blinking"—in these the *g final* is dispensed with; and "eyes" is not a Scotch word—invariably in the singular it is "ee," and in the plural "een." The fault here is not yours, but is that of the author Macklin himself, an Irishman, the text being eyes: he doubtless counted on his privilege, and blundered.

The veritable Sandy Gordon "still lives a worthy gentleman," and occupies the old Counting House in the City. There are many glossaries of the Scottish dialect accessible, and that of Professor Jamieson bears a high impress. I am, Sir,

Your very obedient servant,

JOHN MASSON,

SAMUEL PHELPS, ESQ.

Chairman of Committee.

Hackney Road,
December 3rd, 1857.

SIR,

I was from home, or should have acknowledged your letter earlier. I feel much obliged for the admissions you have been kind enough to send me, and self and family will avail of them. I regret to think you should take it as a complaint; on the contrary, I said we were much delighted and perfectly satisfied with the admirable manner you have produced *As You Like It*. I should not have written but from an observation that a friend made some time ago. I frequently meet several of your admirers who were play-goers in Edmund Kean and Kemble's glorious days, and they, like me, care not for any house but yours. In course of conversation he said he did not think the *Times* acted fairly in its reports. This I had frequently noticed, but the *Times* is the *Times*, and I was ungenerous enough to accuse it of wilful mistakes. Allow me to thank you, and beg you will excuse my taking up so much of your valuable time; but we cannot refrain from expressing our opinion that Edmund Kean will never die while you favour the stage with your support.

I saw Kean *many times* in *each* of his characters, and, "nay, do not think I flatter," when last I saw you in Sir Giles Overreach I was transported, and my friend detected me several times saying, "Well done, *Kean!*" Your passion scene, I may say, surpassed his; so does your Hamlet. One character I longed to see Kean in—that was Iago; for weeks he was announced for it, and play-goers were on tiptoe for it, but never saw it. I was there the night he was taken ill—his first appearance with his son—when Warde finished the part.

I was also acquainted with old Mr. Garner, librarian at Margate. In George III.'s time he was a theatrical, and had seen Garrick sixty-three times; he saw Sir Giles with me, and said Kean's was as good as Garrick's—I may safely say same of yours. Pray excuse this, and do not be offended with me. "I cannot choose but blab" when Shakespeare is my cue.

Yours most respectfully,

SAMUEL PHELPS, ESQ.

A. R. GODDARD.

P.S.—Your letter I shall preserve with my relics.

6, Kent Terrace, Regent's Park.
Tuesday, —, 1863.

MY DEAR SIR,

Our personal acquaintance is slight, but it was formed on an occasion neither of us is likely to forget; it was when you gave your kind assistance to an effort in favour of the family of Douglas Jerrold. This may be my apology for addressing you without further introduction. My object is merely to enclose to you a few lines which I have had the opportunity of inserting in to-morrow's *Punch*, and to say, privately, that the intellectual pleasure afforded by your personation of what is, I suppose, about as difficult a character as is to be found in the range of the modern drama, is a gratification of the highest order to some of us who have not been quite spoiled for poetry by the vulgarity and nonsense of the new school—if it deserve the name. Pray accept, in the spirit in which it is made, a tribute paid in all sincerity. I wish Douglas Jerrold had lived to write on Manfred as he did on *The Midsummer Night's Dream*. Believe me, my dear Sir,

Yours most sincerely,

SAMUEL PHELPS, ESQ.

SHIRLEY BROOKS.

(The then Editor of *Punch*.)

5, Wood Street, Stratford-on-Avon,
January 27th, 1864.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have to thank you most warmly for your very kind letter, received this morning. It is to me entirely satisfactory, and no less so to those who made me very uncomfortable on the subject.

Commentary from *me* on the facts you state is unadvisable. But this much I may safely say, that, having been a worshipper of the great William Charles Macready (tragedians "more terribly in earnest" there *may* have been: I never saw them), I must have regarded you as his legitimate successor, if he had not pointed you out himself as the man to uphold the British Drama. But fortified in my judgment by his memorable deliverance on the subject, I have always regarded you since his retirement as the British Actor *par excellence*, and have made no secret of my opinion, either in conversation or in writing. You will therefore understand my views and feelings on the entire matter. Again thanking you for your full, candid, and cordial reply to my note of Monday evening, I am, my dear Sir, with profound respect,

Ever faithfully yours,

SAMUEL PHELPS, ESQ.

ROBERT E. HUNTER.

THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT GARDEN.

This present Thursday, October 13th, 1814,

WILL BE ACTED OTWAY'S TRAGEDY OF

VENICE PRESERVED.

The Duke of Venice	...	...	...	...	...	MR. CRESWELL	
Prinli	...	MR. EGERTON			Bedamar	...	MR. BARRYMORE
Jaffier	...	...	...	...	...	...	MR. CONWAY
Pierre	...	...	...	...	...	...	MR. YOUNG
Renault	...	MR. CHAPMAN			Spinosa	...	MR. CLAREMONT
Elliot	...	MR. HAMERTON			Theodore	...	MR. KING
Mezzana	...	MR. NORRIS			Durand	...	MR. GRANT
Captain of the Guard	...	MR. JEFFERIES			Officer	...	MR. TREBY
Belvidera	...	...	...	...	...	...	MISS O'NEILL

(Being her first appearance in that character)

To which will be added, for the 9th time, a New Melo-Drama, in three acts, (Founded on an Historical Fact) called

THE FOREST OF BONDY;

OR, THE DOG OF MONTARGIS.

The Overture and the whole of the Musick composed by MR. BISHOP.
The Action arranged by MR. FARLEY.

Colonel Gontran	...	...	...	...	...	...	MR. BARRYMORE
Captain Aubri	...	...	...	...	...	...	MR. ABBOTT
Lieutenant Macaire	...	...	...	...	...	...	MR. FARLEY
Lieutenant Landry	...	...	...	...	...	...	MR. HAMERTON
The Seneschal of Bondy	...	...	...	...	...	...	MR. EGERTON
Florio (a Dumb Orphan)	...	...	...	...	...	...	MISS S. BOOTH
Blaise	...	...	...	...	...	...	MR. LISTON
Ensign	...	MR. DURUSET			Sergeant	...	MR. HOWELL
Dame Gertrude	...	...	...	...	...	...	MRS. DAVENPORT
Annette	...	MRS. NORMAN			Louise	...	MISS WEST
Lucille	...	...	...	...	...	...	MISS FOOTE

In Act I., a Pastoral Pas de Deux by MONS. SOISSONS and MRS. PARKER.

VIVANT REX ET REGINA.

The Publick are respectfully informed that Miss O'NEILL's third performance of JULIET was greeted with the most rapturous and unprecedented applause from an overflowing audience, and that she will repeat that Character on Monday next.

. *No Orders can be admitted.*

 The Publick are respectfully informed that MR. KEMBLE is engaged at this Theatre, and that due notice will be given of his first appearance.

THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE.

*This present Thursday, November 10th, 1814,*THEIR MAJESTIES' SERVANTS WILL PERFORM, THIRD TIME AT THIS
THEATRE, SHAKESPEARE'S TRAGEDY OF

MACBETH.

The Original Musick by M. LOCKE.—With an Overture and
Act Symphonies, by Mr. HORN.

Duncan, King of Scotland ...	... ..	Mr. POWELL
Malcolm ...	Mr. I. WALLACK	Donalbain ... Miss CARR
Macbeth ...	... ..	Mr. KEAN
Banquo ...	Mr. POPE	Macduff ... Mr. RAE
Lenox ...	Mr. ELINGTON	Rosse ... Mr. HOLLAND
Fleance ...	Miss S. CARR	Siward ... Mr. R. PHILLIPS
Seyton ...	Mr. CROOKE	Physician ... Mr. MADDOCKS
Serjeant ...	Mr. WALDEGRAVE	Murderers ... MESSRS. COOKE, CHATTERLEY
Officers ...	MESSRS. BUXTON, HOPE, MATHEWS, COSTE, BROWN, APPLEBY, JAMESON, WHYBER, WEST	
Lady Macbeth ...	... ..	Mrs. BARTLEY
Gentlewoman ...	Miss TIDSWELL	Hecate ... Mr. BELLAMY
First Witch ...	Mr. DOWTON	Second Witch ... Mr. KNIGHT
Third Witch ...	... ..	Mr. LOVEGROVE
Apparitions ...	... ..	Mr. I. WEST, Miss A. CARR, Miss C. CARR
Principal Singing Witches ...	... ..	MESSRS. PHILIPPS, PYNE, SMITH, J. SMITH, LEE, GATTIE, BARNARD, MARSHALL, PENLEY, Mrs. DICKONS, Mrs. BLAND, Miss KELLY, Mrs. ORGER, Miss POOLE, Mrs. HARLOWE
Chorus of Witches and Spirits.		

To which will be added, 8th time, a Comick Drama, in two acts,
(taken from the French) called

JEAN DE PARIS.

Jean de Paris ...	Mr. ELLISTON	Seneschal ...	Mr. LOVEGROVE
Theodore ...	Mr. I. WALLACK	Larry Mac Muggins ...	Mr. JOHNSTONE
Princess of Navarre ...	Mrs. EDWIN	Olivier ...	Miss KELLY
Lorezza ...	... ..	... ..	Mrs. ORGER

In Act II, a NEW BALLET, composed by Mr. BYRNE.—The Musick by Mr. HORN.

Principal Characters in the Ballet ... MISSES SMITH, JOHANNOT, VALLANCY,
RUGGLES, S. HART, HARRISON** The New Comick Drama of JEAN DE PARIS, is published by
Whittingham & Arlis, Paternoster Row, and may be had in the Theatre.

SHAKESPEARE'S Tragedy of MACBETH, which was revived on Saturday, with extraordinary Splendour, having been a Second Time accompanied throughout the whole Performance with the approving Acclamations of an immense Concource of Spectators, will be repeated This Evening, Saturday, and Thursday next.

** Mr. KEAN will repeat the Character of KING RICHARD III. every
Monday till further Notice.

VIVANT REX ET REGINA.

NO MONEY TO BE RETURNED.

THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT GARDEN.

This present Friday, November 11th, 1814,

WILL BE ACTED SOUTHERN'S TRAGEDY OF

ISABELLA;

OR, THE FATAL MARRIAGE.

Count Baldwin	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	Mr. MURRAY
Biron	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	Mr. YOUNG
Biron's Son	...	MASTER C. PARSLÖE						Carlos	...
Villeroy	...	Mr. EGERTON						Maurice	...
Belford	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	Mr. CLAREMONT
Gentlemen	...	...	...					MESSRS. GEORGE, GOODWIN, SARJANT	
Officer	...	Mr. ATKINS						Samson	...
Sancho	...	Mr. YARNOLD	Manuel	...	Mr. HEATH	Juan	...	Mr. LOUIS	
Tipstaves	...	...	...	...	...			MESSRS. BROWN and POWERS	
Bravos	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	MESSRS. KING, GRANT, PLATT	
Isabella	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	MISS O'NEILL	

(Being her second appearance in that character)

Ladies MESDAMES BOLOGNA, COATES, HEATH, RYALL, SEXTON

Nurse MRS. EMERY

In Act III. an Epithalamium—The Vocal Parts by MISS MATTHEWS, MRS. STERLING, MESSRS. I. BROWN, NORRIS, TINNEY.

To which will be added (at the Particular Request of numerous Parties)
the last new Melo-Drama of

THE FOREST OF BONDY;

OR, THE DOG OF MONTARGIS.

*** The Publick are respectfully informed that MISS O'NEILL performed the character of ISABELLA with a success perfectly unprecedented; she will repeat that character on every Friday—the part of BELVIDERA on every Wednesday—and JULIET every Monday till further notice.

*** MR. KEMBLE'S nights of performing will be on Tuesday and Thursday next.

*** No Orders can be admitted.

THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT GARDEN.

This present Thursday, December 8th, 1814,

WILL BE ACTED SHAKESPEARE'S TRAGEDY OF

KING JOHN.

John, King of England	...	...	...	...	...	Mr. KEMBLE
Prince Henry	...	Mr. MENAGE	...	Earl of Pembroke	...	Mr. TREBY
Earl of Essex	...	...	...	...	...	Mr. HAMERTON
Earl of Salisbury	...	...	...	...	...	Mr. BARRYMORE
Hubert	...	Mr. EGERTON	...	Faulconbridge	...	Mr. CONWAY
Robert Faulconbridge	...	...	...	...	...	Mr. KING
English Herald	...	...	...	...	...	Mr. JEFFERIES
James Gurney	...	...	...	...	...	Mr. CRUMPTON
Executioners	...	...	...	...	...	MESSRS. ATKINS and BANKS
English Knights	...	...	...	...	...	MESSRS. BATT, GRANT, LOUIS, THURSTON
Philip, King of France	...	...	...	...	...	Mr. MURRAY
Lewis, the Dauphin	...	Mr. ABBOTT	...	Prince Arthur	...	MASTER CHAPMAN
Archduke of Austria	...	...	...	...	...	Mr. CRESWELL
Cardinal Pandulph	...	...	...	...	...	Mr. CHAPMAN
Chatillon	...	Mr. CLAREMONT	...	French Herald	...	Mr. HOWELL
Citizens of Angiers	...	...	...	...	...	MESSRS. DURUSET, POWERS, BROWN
French Knights	...	...	...	...	...	MESSRS. HEATH, PLATT, SARJANT, YARNOLD
Queen Elinor	...	...	...	...	...	Mrs. EGERTON
The Lady Constance	...	...	...	...	...	Mrs. FAUCIT
Blanch, of Castile	...	...	...	...	...	Miss BRISTOW
Lady Faulconbridge	...	...	...	...	...	Miss LOGAN

To which will be added (for the 3rd time) a New Farce called

THE KING AND THE DUKE;

OR, WHICH IS WHICH?

The Publick are respectfully informed that Miss O'NEILL, having recovered from her late severe Indisposition, the following arrangements have been made to meet, in some degree, the unprecedented applications for her performances—To-morrow she will act the character of ISABELLA—on Monday, BELVIDERA—and on Wednesday she will appear for the First Time in the character of MRS. BEVERLEY in the Tragedy of THE GAMESTER—and JULIET on Monday the 19th.

. MR. KEMBLE'S nights of performing will be on Tuesday and Thursday next.

. No Orders can be admitted.

 THE LAST NIGHT OF MR. KEMBLE'S PERFORMANCE.

 THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT GARDEN.

This present Tuesday, December 20th, 1814,
 (BY PARTICULAR DESIRE) SHAKESPEARE'S TRAGEDY OF

MACBETH.

The Overture and Symphonies between the Acts by MR. WARE.

The Vocal Musick by MATTHEW LOCKE.

Duncan, King of Scotland	... ..	MR. MURRAY
Malcolm ... MR. ABBOTT	... ..	Donalbain ... MR. MENAGE
Macbeth	... ..	MR. KEMBLE
Macduff ... MR. CONWAY	... ..	Banquo ... MR. BARRYMORE
Fleance ... MASTER C. PARSLOE	... ..	Lenox ... MR. CRESWELL
Rosse ... MR. HAMERTON	... ..	Siward ... MR. ATKINS
Seyton ... MR. CLAREMONT	... ..	Physician ... MR. CHAPMAN
Officers	... ..	MESSRS. KING and JEFFERIES
Chamberlains	... ..	MESSRS. HEATH and SARJANT
Lady Macbeth	... ..	MRS. RENAUD
Gentlewoman	... ..	MISS LOGAN
Ladies ... MESDAMES BOLOGNA, CORRI, HEATH, RYALL, STANDEN, WEST	... ..	
Hecate	... ..	MR. INCLEDON
Witches	... ..	MESSRS. BLANCHARD, FARLEY, SIMMONS
Apparitions	... ..	MR. HOWELL, MISS S. GOODWIN, MISS C. GOODWIN
The principal Vocal Witches	... ..	MESSRS. SINCLAIR, TAYLOR, BROADHURST,
	... ..	DURUSET, TINNEY, SLADER, I. BROWN, CRUMPTON, EVERARD, LEE, LINTON,
	... ..	MONTAGUE, NORRIS, J. TAYLOR, I. TERRY, TETT, S. TETT, C. TETT,
	... ..	TREBY, WATSON, WILLIAMS, &c., &c., MISS MATTHEWS, MRS. LISTON, MRS.
	... ..	BISHOP, MRS. STERLING, MRS. DAVENPORT, MISS S. BOOTH, MISS BRISTOW,
	... ..	MISS FOOTE, MESDS. CAREW, COATES, DAVIES, EMERY, FINDLAY, GRIMALDI,
	... ..	HERBERT, HIBBERT, ILIFF, KENNEDY, LEAVER, LEFERVE, NORMAN, SEXTON,
	... ..	WARD, WATTS, WHITMORE, &c., &c.

After which (10th time) a New Farce called

THE KING AND THE DUKE,

OR, WHICH IS WHICH?

* * * The Publick are respectfully informed that Miss O'NEILL acted the part of MRS. BEVERLEY with a success fully commensurate to her former enthusiastically admired Performances—and in order to repeat it without disappointment to those numerous Parties who have obtained the Boxes for her other Characters, she will act One Extra Night in this week—therefore to-morrow she will perform BELVIDERA; on Thursday, MRS. BEVERLEY; and on Friday, ISABELLA (being the last night before the holidays); and on Monday, the 9th of January, she will repeat JULIET.

* * * No Orders can be admitted.

MISS O'NEILL'S NIGHT.

THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT GARDEN.

This present Saturday, April 29th, 1815,

WILL BE PERFORMED THE TRAGEDY OF

THE GRECIAN DAUGHTER.

Evander	...	...	...	...	...	...	Mr. YOUNG
Dionysius	...	MR. CONWAY	...	...	Phocion	...	MR. ABBOTT
Melanthon	...	MR. MURRAY	...	...	Philotas	...	MR. TERRY
Arcas	...	MR. JEFFERIES	...	...	Herald	...	MR. CRESWELL
Euphrasia	...	...	...	...	...	...	MISS O'NEILL
(Being her first appearance in that character)							
Erixene	...	...	...	...	...	...	MISS BRISTOW

After which (2nd time) Milton's revived Masque of

COMUS.

The Scenery, Machinery, Dances, Dresses, and all other Decorations are entirely new.

The original Musick by HANDEL and ARNE. With additions by BISHOP.

The Overture by CHERUBINI. The Scenery painted by MESSRS. PHILLIPS,

WHITMORE, PUGH, GRIEVE, HOLLOGAN, HOOGINS, and their assistants.

The Machinery by MR. SAUL. The Decorations by MR. BRADWELL.

The Dresses by MR. FLOWER and MISS EGAN.

Comus	...	...	...	...	...	...	MR. CONWAY
Spirit	...	...	...	...	...	...	MR. DURUSET
Elder Brother	...	MR. ABBOTT	...	...	Younger Brother	...	MISS FOOTE
Bacchanals	...	MESSRS. INCLEDON, SINCLAIR, TAYLOR, BROADHURST, TINNEY, SLADER, TREBY, KING, NORRIS, I. BROWN, EVERARD, LEE, LINTON, MONTAGUE, I. TERRY, TETT, C. TETT, S. TETT, WATSON, WILLIAMS					
Lady	...	...	...	...	...	...	MRS. FAUCIT
First Bacchant, and Pastoral Nymph	...	...	...	...	...	...	MISS STEPHENS
Second Bacchant, and Euphrosyne	...	...	...	...	...	...	MISS MATTHEWS
Third Bacchant, and Sabrina	...	...	...	...	...	...	MRS. BISHOP
Fourth Bacchant	...	MRS. LISTON	...	...	Fifth Bacchant	...	MRS. STERLING
Other Bacchantes and Wood Nymphs	...	MESDAMES BOYCE, CAREW, CHIP, COATES, CORRI, DAVIES, DAVIS, FINDLAY, GRIMALDI, HERBERT, HIBBERT, ILIFF, LEVER, NORMAN, RYALL, SEXTON, WEST, WHITMORE, &c.					
Bacchanalian Dance	...	...	...	...	...	...	MRS. PARKER
Dance of Naiades and Nereides	...	MONS. SOISSONS, MISS LUPPINO, MESSRS. BROWN, GRANT, HEATH, LOUIS, PLATT, SARJANT, SUTTON, WHITE, MESDS. BRADWELL, BOLOGNA, BOYCE, HEATH, LOUIS, RYALL, STANDEN, WATTS					

*** Books of the Masque, as it is represented, may be had in the Theatre, price 10d.

MISS O'NEILL will perform on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday next week. On Thursday, MRS. HALLER. MR. KEMBLE will perform, on Monday, Coriolanus—on Thursday, The Stranger.

*** No Orders can be admitted.

THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE.

This present Monday, February 12th, 1816,

THEIR MAJESTIES' SERVANTS WILL PERFORM (TENTH TIME AT THIS
THEATRE) MASSINGER'S PLAY OF

A NEW WAY TO PAY OLD DEBTS.

Lord Lovell	Mr. HOLLAND
Sir Giles Over-reach	Mr. KEAN
Wellborn	Mr. HARLEY
Allworth	Mr. S. PENLEY
Welldo ... MR. CARR	Justice Greedy ... Mr. OXBERRY
Marrall	Mr. MUNDEN
Tapwell ... MR. WEWITZER	Order ... Mr. HUGHES
Furnace ... MR. PENLEY	Amble ... Mr. MINTON
Watchall ... MR. MADDOCKS	Taylor ... Mr. COVENEY
Vintner ... MR. COOKE	Creditors ... MR. BUXTON and MR. EVANS
Servants ... MESSRS. MATHEWS, GOODMAN, VIALS, G. WELLS, APPLEBY,	BROWN, COOPER
Lady Allworth	MRS. GLOVER
Margaret ... MRS. HORN	Froth ... MISS TIDSWELL

To which will be added (2nd time this Season) the comick Opera of

ROSINA.

MR. KEAN will repeat the Character of SIR GILES OVER-REACH, in A NEW WAY TO PAY OLD DEBTS, every Friday and Monday, and will appear in MACBETH on Wednesday.

The TWO YOUNG LADIES, who appeared on Saturday Evening, as ROSINA and PHÆBE, were received with unbounded and unanimous Applause, and will perform those Parts, for the 2nd and 3rd times, This Evening and on Thursday next.

MR. YOUNG'S NIGHT.

THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT GARDEN.

This present Wednesday, May 29th, 1816,

WILL BE ACTED SHAKESPEARE'S PLAY OF

CYMBELINE.

Cymbeline	...	...	...	...	...	...	MR. EGERTON
Polydore	...	...	(for that night only)	...	...	...	MR. C. KEMBLE
Cadwal	...	...	...	...	...	...	MR. ABBOTT
Cloten	...	(first time, and for that night only)	...	...	...	...	MR. LISTON
Morgan	...	(first time, and for that night only)	...	...	...	...	MR. TERRY
Leonatus Posthumus	...	...	...	...	...	...	MR. KEMBLE
Iachimo	...	...	...	...	...	...	MR. YOUNG
Queen	...	MRS. EGERTON			Helen	...	MISS BOYCE
Imogen	...	...	(first time)	...	...	...	MISS STEPHENS

In Act II. DR. COOKE'S favourite Glee of "Hark, the Lark," by
MESSRS. TAYLOR, NORRIS, TINNEY, and MISS CAREW.

End of the Play, a New Divertisement, in which MR. NOBLE and MISS
LUPPINO will dance the celebrated Spanish Bolero.

After which, a favourite Comick Interlude, called

SYLVESTER DAGGERWOOD.

Sylvester Daggerwood ... (for that night only) ... MR. MATHEWS
(Being his first appearance in that character), in which he will introduce
the Song of "Manager Strut."

In the course of the Evening, the favourite Song of

"Last Week I took a Wife," by MR. MATHEWS,

And "London Improvements; or the Gas Lights and Water Works,"
by MR. EMERY.

With (for that night only) a Grand Melo-Dramatick Romance, called

THE FORTY THIEVES.

MISS O'NEILL will perform To-morrow, MRS. BEVERLEY; on Monday,
EUPHRASIA; and on Thursday, June 6th, MRS. OAKLEY.

MR. KEMBLE will perform on Friday, CARDINAL WOLSEY; on Monday,
EVANDER.

THEATRE ROYAL,
COVENT GARDEN.

This present Wednesday, February 12th, 1817,

WILL BE ACTED SHAKESPEARE'S TRAGEDY OF

KING RICHARD III.

King Henry VI.	MR. EGERTON
Prince of Wales ... MISS GOODWIN	Duke of York ... MISS ADCOCK
Richard, Duke of Gloster	MR. BOOTH
(Of the Brighton and Worthing Theatres)	
Duke of Buckingham	MR. BARRYMORE
Duke of Norfolk ... MR. COMER	Earl of Oxford ... MR. MENAGE
Henry, Earl of Richmond	MR. ABBOTT
Lord Stanley	MR. CHAPMAN
Lord Mayor of London	MR. ATKINS
Sir W. Brandon ... MR. CONNOR	Sir James Blunt ... MR. KING
Sir Richard Rateliff	MR. TREBY
Sir Wm. Catesby	MR. CLAREMONT
Sir Robert Brakenbury	MR. JEFFERIES
Sir James Tyrrel	MR. NORRIS
Aldermen	MESSRS. LEE and CRUMPTON
Officer ... MR. PENN	Forest ... MR. WHITE
Queen Elizabeth	Dighton ... MR. LOUIS
Lady Anne ... MISS S. BOOTH	MRS. FAUCIT
	Duchess of York ... MISS LOGAN

After which, 4th time, a New Ballet Divertissement (composed by
MR. NOBLE) called

AURORA ;

OR, *THE FLIGHT OF ZEPHYR.*

With, 8th time, a New Romantick Drama, in two acts, (founded on
ancient Fact) called

THE RAVENS ;

OR, *THE FORCE OF CONSCIENCE.*

THEATRE ROYAL, HAYMARKET

MR. PHELPS

(Of Provincial Celebrity)

WILL MAKE HIS FIRST APPEARANCE AT THIS THEATRE

In the character of SHYLOCK, this evening.

MRS. WAYLETT

Is engaged, and will appear in WEST COUNTRY WOOING.

MR. W. FARREN

Will appear in the character of UNCLE FOOZLE.

This Evening, Monday, August 28th, 1837,

WILL BE PERFORMED

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE.

Shylock	...	(his first appearance in London)	...	MR. PHELPS
The Duke	...	MR. GOUGH	Bassanio	...
Gratiano	...	MR. VINING	Lorenzo	...
Salanio	...	MR. SELBY	Salarino	...
Antonio	...	MR. HAINES	Launcelot	...
Old Gobbo	...	MR. T. F. MATHEWS	Balthazar	...
Tubal	...	MR. BISHOP	Portia	...
Nerissa	...	MISS E. PHILIPS	Jessica	...
				MISS E. TAYLOR

After which (first time at this Theatre) the Musical Burletta of

WEST COUNTRY WOOING.

To which will be added the Comedy in Two Acts, entitled

MY WIFE'S MOTHER.

MR. W. FARREN, &c., &c.

To conclude with the Farce of

MAKE YOUR WILLS.

MR. STRICKLAND, &c., &c.

MR. POWER will repeat the characters of SIR PATRICK O'PLENIP, and PAT ROONEY, to-morrow, being the last night but one of his engagement.

 THEATRE ROYAL, HAYMARKET.

SWISS SWAINS having been unanimously received, will
be repeated Every Night.

MESDAMES GLOVER, NISBETT, HUMBY, FITZWILLIAM, WAYLETT, GALLOT,
BERESFORD, DAVENPORT, TAYLEURE, E. HONNER, WRIGHTEN,
VANDENHOFF, W. CLIFFORD.

MESSRS. PHELPS, ELTON, VINING, BUCKSTONE, WEBSTER, COLLINS, HAINES,
STRICKLAND, HEMMING, GOUGH, WORRELL, T. F. MATHEWS,
ROSS, GALLOT, RAY, HUTCHINGS, BISHOP, &c., &c.

This Evening, Friday, October 6th, 1837,

WILL BE PRESENTED SHAKESPEARE'S TRAGEDY OF

RICHARD III.

Duke of Glo'ster	...	...	...	...	...	MR. PHELPS
King Henry	...	MR. STRICKLAND		Prince of Wales	...	MISS GALLOT
Duke of York	...	...	...	...	...	MISS M. GALLOT
Duke of Buckingham	...	...	...	...	...	MR. HEMMING
Duke of Norfolk	...	...	...	...	...	MR. RAY
Earl of Richmond	...	...	...	...	...	MR. HAINES
Earl of Oxford	...	MR. EDWARDS		Lord Stanley	...	MR. GOUGH
Lord Mayor	...	MR. ROSS		Sir Wm. Catesby	...	MR. GALLOT
Lieutenant	...	...	...	...	...	MR. T. F. MATHEWS
Sir Richard Ratcliffe	...	MR. WORRELL		Tressell	...	MR. HUTCHINGS
Tyrrell	...	MR. BISHOP		Forrest	...	MR. ANDREWS
Queen Elizabeth	...	...	...	...	...	MRS. GLOVER
Lady Anne	...	...	...	...	...	MISS VANDENHOFF
Duchess of York	...	...	...	...	...	MRS. W. CLIFFORD

After which (Second Time) an original Comic Operetta, called

SWISS SWAINS.

To which will be added MR. BUCKSTONE'S popular Interlude of

MISCHIEF MAKING.

THEATRE ROYAL,
COVENT GARDEN.

This Evening, Friday, October 27th, 1837,

WILL BE PERFORMED OTWAY'S TRAGEDY OF

VENICE PRESERVED.

The Duke of Venice	...	MR. TILBURY	Priuli	...	MR. WALDRON
Bedamar	...	...	...	...	MR. DIDDEAR
Jaffier	...	(his first appearance at this Theatre)	...	...	MR. PHELPS
Pierre	...	...	...	...	MR. MACREADY
Renault	...	MR. G. BENNETT	Spinosa	...	MR. PRITCHARD
Elliott	...	...	...	...	MR. ROBERTS
Belvidera	...	...	...	...	MISS HELEN FAUCIT

During the evening the Band will perform Beethoven's Overture to
Egmont, and Rossini's Overture to *The Mount of Olives*.

After which the Musical Entertainment of

NO SONG, NO SUPPER.

MESSRS. MANDERS, BARTLEY, MEADOWS, LEFFLER, &c. ; MISS SHIREFF,
MISS LAND, MISS P. HORTON, and MRS. GARRICK.

To conclude with the last New Farce (in One Act) of

THE SPITFIRE.

MESSRS. BARTLEY, MEADOWS, MISS P. HORTON, &c.

THEATRE ROYAL, HAYMARKET.

The Public is respectfully informed that the eminent Tragedian,
MR. MACREADY,

Is engaged at this Theatre, and will make his First Appearance here this
season, in the Tragedy of Othello, this Evening.

First Appearances of

MR. PHELPS AND MISS HELEN FAUCIT.

MR. W. FARREN will perform PIERRE BONCŒUR, To-Night.

This Evening, Monday, August 19th, 1839,

WILL BE PERFORMED THE TRAGEDY OF

OTHELLO, THE MOOR OF VENICE.

Duke of Venice	...	...	...	...	...	MR. GOUGH
Brabantio (a Noble Venetian)	...	...	...	...	...	MR. PERKINS
Gratiano (his Brother)	...	...	...	...	...	MR. WORRELL
Lodovico (kinsman to Brabantio and Gratiano)	...	...	...	...	...	MR. HOWE
(From the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden—his First Appearance)						
Othello, the Moor (General for the Venetians in Cyprus)	...	...	...	...	...	MR. MACREADY
Cassio (his Lieut.-General)	...	...	...	...	...	MR. COOPER
Iago (Standard-Bearer to Othello)	...	...	...	...	...	MR. PHELPS
(From the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden—his First Appearance this Season)						
Roderigo (a foolish Gentleman, in love with Desdemona)	...	...	...	...	...	MR. WALTER LACY
Montano	{	The Moor's predecessor in the Govern- ment of Cyprus			{	MR. HEMMING
Messenger						
Desdemona (Daughter to Brabantio, and Wife to Othello)	...	...	...	...	...	MISS HELEN FAUCIT
(From the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden—being her First Appearance at this Theatre)						
Emilia (Wife to Iago)	...	...	...	...	...	MRS. WARNER

The following Pieces of Music will be performed in the course of the
evening: Overture, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Rossini; Walzer, *La Belle
Gabrielle*, Strauss; Overture, *Chaperon Blanc*, Auber.

Will be Performed (21st Time) a new Drama, in Two Acts, called

THE VILLAGE DOCTOR.

To conclude with the Farce of

JOHN JONES.

Positively the Last Nights but Five of MR. POWER; to-morrow he will
perform in Two Favourite Pieces.

MISS ELLEN TREE is engaged at this Theatre, and will make her First
Appearance since her return from America, immediately after the
close of MR. POWER's Engagement.

THEATRE ROYAL,
DRURY LANE.

MR. PHELPS

Respectfully announces that his Benefit is fixed for

Tuesday, May 30th, 1843,

WHEN WILL BE PERFORMED SHAKESPEARE'S PLAY OF

THE WINTER'S TALE.

Leontes	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	MR. MACREADY
Polixenes	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	MR. RYDER
Florizel	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	MR. ANDERSON
Antigonus	..	..	...	...	...	...	...	MR. PHELPS
Camillo	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	MR. ELTON
Autolicus	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	MR. COMPTON
Clown	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	MR. KEELEY
Hermione	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	MISS HELEN FAUCIT
Paulina	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	MRS. WARNER
Perdita	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	MRS. NISBETT
Mopsa	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	MRS. KEELEY
Dorcas	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	MISS P. HORTON

AND OTHER ENTERTAINMENTS.

ROYAL ITALIAN OPERA, COVENT GARDEN.

THE SHAKESPEARE NIGHT,

Tuesday Evening, December 7th, 1847,

Overture composed for the occasion, and conducted by SIR HENRY BISHOP.

Prologue written by MR. CHARLES KNIGHT, and recited by MR. PHELPS.

I.—THE DEATH OF HENRY IV.

Second Part of King Henry IV. Act IV. Scene iii.

King Henry ... MR. MACREADY Prince Henry ... MR. LEIGH MURRAY

II.—LAUNCE AND SPEED.

The Two Gentlemen of Verona, Act III. Scene i.

Launce ... MR. HARLEY Speed ... MR. BUCKSTONE

III.—DEATH OF QUEEN KATHARINE.

Henry VIII. Act IV. Scene ii.

Queen Katharine MRS. BUTLER

IV.—FALSTAFF'S RECRUITS BEFORE JUSTICE SHALLOW.

Second Part of King Henry IV. Act III. Scene ii.

Shallow ... MR. W. FARREN Silence ... MR. H. HALL

Falstaff MR. GRANBY

V.—JULIET'S MARRIAGE DAY.

Romeo and Juliet, the Fourth Act entire.

Juliet ... MISS HELEN FAUCIT Nurse ... MRS. GLOVER

Friar Lawrence MR. DIDDEAR

VI.—KATHARINE AND PETRUCHIO.

Taming of the Shrew, portions of Act I. and Act IV.

Petruchio ... MR. WEBSTER Katharine ... MRS. NISBETT

Grumio MR. KEELEY

VII.—THE BUCK BASKET.

The Merry Wives of Windsor, Act III. Scenes iii. and iv.; Act IV. Scene iii.

Falstaff ... MR. GRANBY Slender ... MR. CHARLES MATTHEWS

Ford ... MR. ROXBY Mrs. Page ... MADAME VESTRIS

Page ... MR. PARSELE Mrs. Ford ... MRS. STIRLING

Sir Hugh Evans ... MR. MEADOWS Mrs. Quickly ... MRS. C. JONES

Shallow ... MR. F. MATTHEWS Anne Page ... MISS HOWARD

Dr. Caius MR. J. BLAND

VIII.—THE STORY OF PROSPERO.

Tempest, Act I. Scene ii.

Prospero ... MR. PHELPS Miranda ... MISS LAURA ADDISON

Ferdinand ... MR. H. MARSTON Ariel ... MISS P. HORTON

Caliban MR. G. BENNETT

IX.—THE STATUE SCENE.

A Winter's Tale, Act V. Scene iii.

Hermione ... MRS. WARNER

Paulina ... MRS. TYRRELL

Leontes ... MR. GRAHAM

Perdita ... MISS ANGELL

1562

THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE.

Managers—MESSRS. EDMUND FALCONER AND F. B. CHATTERTON.

On Monday, December 14th, 1863, and During the Week,

Her Majesty's Servants will perform (Friday excepted) the New and Original Farce, by W. BROUGH and A. HALLIDAY, ESQS., entitled

MY HEART'S IN THE HIGHLANDS.

John O'Groat (a retired Tobacconist)	...	...	...	...	Mr. J. NEVILLE
Duncan Grey (a young Scottish Gentleman)	...	...	...	...	MR. WARDE
Muggins (a Cockney Hairdresser)	...	...	...	...	MR. G. BELMORE
Walker (a Cockney Greengrocer)	...	...	...	...	MR. G. WESTON
Gillie (a Scotch Servant)	...	Mr. J. MORRIS	Tibbie	...	MRS. C. MELVILLE
Caledonia O'Groat (only Daughter of O'Groat)	...	...	...	...	MISS HARFLEUR
Time—Present.					

AFTER WHICH, COMMENCING AT A QUARTER BEFORE EIGHT, AND CONCLUDING ABOUT TEN O'CLOCK, LORD BYRON'S CHORAL TRAGEDY OF

MANFRED.

MORTALS.

Manfred	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	Mr. PHELPS
Abbot of St. Maurice	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	MR. RYDER
A Chamois Hunter	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	MR. A. RAYNER
Manuel (an aged retainer)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	MR. NEVILLE
Herman (a young domestic in the Castle of Manfred)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	MR. G. WESTON
Retainers	...	MESSRS. BEDFORD, WEAVER, KIRK, WILSON, SMITH, and EDWARDS								

IMMORTALS.

Arimanes (Ru'er of the Evil Agencies)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	MR. WARDE
Ariel (Spirit of the Ether)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	MISS LEONTI
Hesper (Spirit of the Stars)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	MISS LOUISA RITTER
Undine (Spirit of the Waters)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	MISS POOLE
Miserima (Spirit of Memory)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	MISS CICELY NOTT
Auster (Spirit of the Storm)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	MR. SWIFT
Astaroth (Spirit of the Earth)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	MR. MEAGRESON
Nubes (Spirit of the Shadow of Night)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	MR. RYDE
Titanos (Spirit of the Mountains)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	MR. G. SPENCER
Nemesis (Goddess of Vengeance)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	MRS. EDMUND FALCONER
Clotho	} the Three Destinies	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	MISS EMMA ATKINSON
Lachesis		...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	MISS C. WESTON
Atropos		...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	MISS MURRAY
The Phantom of Astarte	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	MISS ROSE LECLERQ
The Witch of the Alps	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	MRS. M. EBURNE
Evil Agencies and Spirit Spectres of the Weird World	...	MESSRS. T. MATTHEWS, J. MORRIS, J. CORMACK, MISS SEYMOUR, MISS HARFLEUR, MISS GREEN, MRS. C. MELVILLE, MRS. WARLOW, and the Ladies and Gentlemen of the Choir and the BALLET.								

Previous to the Tragedy, the Orchestra will perform SCHUMANN'S celebrated Overture to *Manfred*.

To conclude with the New and Highly Successful Farce, by JOHN OXENFORD, ESQ., entitled

BEAUTY OR THE BEAST.

THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE.

Managers—MESSRS. E. FALCONER AND F. B. CHATTERTON.

Open for the Season for the Performance of the Legitimate Drama.

On Thursday and Saturday, November 3rd and 5th, 1864,

The Performances will commence with the Farce of

TOO MUCH FOR GOOD NATURE.

On Friday, November 4th,

The Performances will commence with the New and Original Farce of

THE O'FLAHERTYS.

After which, Each Evening, commencing at Eight o'clock, produced on a scale of great completeness, combining in the representation all the Characters, Supernatural Agents, Choruses, Musical and Scenical Illusions, SHAKESPEARE'S Tragedy of

MACBETH.

The Scenery by MR. WILLIAM BEVERLEY.

Duncan (King of Scotland)	Mr. J. NEVILLE
Malcolm } his Sons	{ Mr. G. F. NEVILLE
Donalbain }	{ Mr. WEAVER
Macbeth } Generals of the King's Army	{ Mr. PHILPS
Banquo }	{ Mr. A. RAYNER
Macduff } Noblemen of Scotland	{ Mr. CRESWICK
Lennox }	{ Mr. WARDE
Rosse }	{ Mr. H. SINCLAIR
Fleance (Son to Banquo)	MISS COLLIER
Siward { Earl of Northumberland, General of the English Forces	{ Mr. FITZJAMES
Seyton ...	MR. MEAGRESON
Bleeding Officer	Physician ... MR. LICKFOLD
First and Second Murderers	MR. T. C. HARRIS
First Officer ...	MESSRS. SIMMS and HOWARD
First Witch ...	MR. BEDFORD
Second Witch ...	MR. GLYNDON
Third Witch ...	MR. G. BELMORE
Fourth Witch ...	MR. EDMUND PHILPS
First Singing Witch	MR. ROBERT ROXBY
Second Singing Witch	Hecate ... MR. BARTLEMAN
Third Singing Witch	MISS REBECCA ISAACS
Fourth Singing Witch	MISS EMMA HEYWOOD
Lady Macbeth	MR. MARLER
Gentlewoman	MR. MATHIESON
	MISS ELLEN FAUCH
	MISS GREEN

Previous to the Tragedy, the Orchestra will play L. SPOHR's Overture to *Macbeth*.

Musical Director, MR. J. BARNARD. Ballet Master, MR. J. CORMACK.
 Prompter, MR. J. MORRIS. Costumiers, MR. S. MAY and MRS. LAWREN.
 Machinist, MR. J. TUCKER. Properties, MR. T. NEEDHAM.
 Gas Appointments, MR. J. HINKLEY.

Managers—MESSRS. E. FALCONER AND F. B. CHATTERTON.

Last Six Nights of KING JOHN.

THE PERFORMANCES WILL COMMENCE WITH (AT SEVEN O'CLOCK PRECISELY)
SHAKESPEARE'S HISTORICAL TRAGEDY OF

KING JOHN.

King John	MR. PHELPS
Prince Henry (his Son, afterwards King Henry III.)	MISS E. FALCONER
Arthur, Duke { Son to Geoffrey, late Duke of Bretagne, the of Bretagne { elder Brother of King John }	MASTER P. ROSELLE
William Marshall (Earl of Pembroke)	MR. MCINTYRE
Geffrey Fitz-Peter (Earl of Essex, Chief Justiciary of England) ...	MR. WEAVER
William Longsword (Earl of Salisbury)	MR. EDMUND PHELPS
Robert Bigot (Earl of Norfolk)	MR. C. VANDENHOFF
Hubert de Burgh (Chamberlain to the King)	MR. SWINBOURNE
Robert Faulconbridge (Son of Sir Robert Faulconbridge) ...	MR. G. WESTON
Philip Faulconbridge, afterwards { his Half-Brother, Bastard } Sir Richard Plantagenet { Son to King Richard I. }	MR. JAMES ANDERSON
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Peter of Pomfret (a Prophet)	MR. J. BEDFORD
Philip, King of France	MR. A. RAYNER
Louis, the Dauphin	MR. F. BARSBY
Archduke of Austria	MR. J. SPENCER
Cardinal Pandulph (the Pope's Legate)	MR. BARRETT
Giles Vicomte Melun (a French Lord)	MR. MEAGRESON
Chatillon (Ambassador from France to King John)	MR. CHAS. HARCOURT
An English Herald	MR. C. WARNER
A French Herald	MR. LICKFOLD
A Citizen of Angiers	MR. J. NEVILLE
Elinor { the Widow of King Henry II. and Mother of King John }	MRS. H. VANDENHOFF
Constance (Mother to Arthur)	MISS ATKINSON
Blanche { Daughter to Alphonse, King of Castile, and Niece to King John }	MISS ROSE LECLERCQ
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Overture	...	...	"King O' Scots"	...	...	W. C. Levey.
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The Piece Written and Adapted by ANDREW HALLIDAY.

The New and Magnificent Scenery, Illustrative of Old London, by WILLIAM BEVERLEY. The Overture and Incidental Music selected and arranged by MR. W. C. LEVEY. The Dances and Groupings of Crowds arranged by MR. JOHN CORMACK. The Costumes by MR. VOKES and MRS. LAWLER, from Authorities supplied by MR. WILLIAM BRUNTON. The whole produced under the Direction of MR. EDWARD STIRLING.

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Lord Dalgarno	...	MR. H. SINCLAIR	Nigel, Lord Glenvarloch	...	MR. E. PRICE
George Heriot (Jeweller to the King)	...	...	...	...	MR. ADDISON
David Ramsay (a Watchmaker)	...	...	...	...	MR. JAMES JOHNSTONE
Sir Mungo Malagrowther (a Cynical Courtier)	...	...	...	...	MR. JOHN ROUSE
Richie Moniplies (Nigel's Scotch Servant)	...	...	...	...	MR. G. CUMMING
Jin Vin (a London Apprentice)	...	...	...	...	MR. JOSEPH IRVING
Frank Tunstal (an Apprentice)	...	...	...	...	MR. O'NEILL
Maxwell (Chamberlain to the King)	...	...	...	...	MR. LICKFOLD
Mansfield (Lieutenant of the Tower)	...	...	...	...	MR. RIGNOLD
The Lady Hermione (a Mystery)	...	...	...	...	MISS EDITH STUART
Margaret Ramsay	...	...	...	...	MISS HEATH
Dame Ursula Saddlechops (Gossip and Go-between)	...	...	...	...	MRS. FRANK MATTHEWS
Martha Trapbois (the Miser's Daughter)	...	...	...	...	MISS FANNY ADDISON

ALSATIANS.

Hildebrod (Duke of Alsatia)	...	...	...	...	MR. BARRETT
Captain Colepepper (a Bully)	...	...	...	...	MR. W. MCINTYRE
Tarpbois (a Miser)	...	...	...	...	MR. PHELPS

APPENDIX.

ON the eve of the Tercentenary of Shakespeare's birth Mr. Phelps took the chair at the meeting of the Shakespeare Club at Birmingham, whose members presented him with a copy of the Devonshire *Hamlet*, with the following title-page and inscription:—

HAMLET

BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE,

1603;

HAMLET

BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

1604:

Being exact Reprints of the First and Second Editions of Shakespeare's great Drama, from the very rare Originals in the possession of his Grace the Duke of Devonshire; with the two texts printed on opposite pages, and so arranged that the parallel passages face each other. And a Bibliographical Preface by Samuel Timmins.

"Look heere upon this Picture, and on this."

LONDON: SAMPSON LOW, SON, & CO., 47, LUDGATE HILL.

1860.

TO

SAMUEL PHELPS, Esq.,

WITH THE HEARTY THANKS OF THE MEMBERS OF

"OUR SHAKESPEARE CLUB"

FOR A GRACIOUS SERVICE RENDERED TO THEM ON THE EVE OF
AN EVER-TO-BE-REMEMBERED DAY.

*Birmingham,
April 22nd, 1864.*

GEORGE DAWSON, PRESIDENT.

The following may have been related otherwise, but I have set down the incidents just as they were told me by Mr. Phelps.

Turning round on his stool one day in the office of the newspaper where both were engaged, Douglas Jerrold said to Phelps rather abruptly, "What have your godfathers and your godmothers done for you?" "What do you mean?" "Well, what have you been taught? What do you know?" This led to a comparing of notes, and it turned out that neither in French nor in Latin was either of them at that moment prepared to undergo an examination. Like wise men, they set about at once redeeming the time. An old Dutch gentleman became their tutor, and they very soon made good their deficiencies in the languages named.

At this time Samuel Phelps and Douglas Jerrold were both members of an amateur acting company, and when the former was to appear at the Olympic Theatre, as "a gentleman amateur," he was very anxious that Jerrold should go and see him play. Next day at the office Phelps was a little surprised that his companion made no allusion to the performance of the previous evening; and, when his surprise waxed into irritating wonder, and he could bear it no longer, he burst out with, "Well, what did you think of my acting? I saw you were there." Jerrold turned very leisurely towards Phelps and delivered himself thus: "It is my very decided opinion that, if you persevere, you *may* eventually make a good Walking Gentleman, and get your five-and-twenty shillings a week; but you must stick to it, remember."

On the 8th of April, 1842, Jerrold's play of *The Prisoner of War* was produced at Drury Lane Theatre, and after the performance was over Jerrold went behind to congratulate Mr. Phelps on his success as Captain Channel, and in course of conversation gave him a dig in the side, saying, "I suppose, old fellow, you have not forgotten my prophecy of the five-and-twenty shillings, eh!—you're getting almost as many pounds, I expect." Mr. Phelps answered him with a long-drawn "No—not quite that." As a matter of fact, he was getting twenty.—J. F. R.

I have said on p. 216, that after playing Brutus for his benefit at Sadler's Wells on the 6th November, 1862, that he never entered that theatre again. It would appear, however, from what I have been told by a friend on whose memory I place some reliance, that my own has been at fault touching that as a fact, for he is said to have acted there one night for the benefit of the sufferers by the Clerkenwell explosion somewhere about the end of 1867, and again for a few nights with Miss Marriott in the autumn of 1869 or thereabouts. Even now I cannot bring it to my remembrance, and it appears to me to be the only thing touching his career at that theatre that my memory has failed me in.

He once acted at the Victoria Theatre in the spring of 1839 for the benefit of Bender, the box book-keeper at Covent Garden. The play was *Julius Cæsar*. He acted Cassius; Warde, Brutus; and Elton,

Marc Antony. *The Sunbeam*, referred to on p. 49, gave a very long and exhaustive criticism on this performance, highly eulogizing it.

The supper referred to in one of Mr. Charles Dickens's letters, p. 390, after the first performance of John Savile of Haysted, and also referred to by the Rev. James White in one of his, p. 386, did not take place on either of the dates they spoke of, but on the 4th November, the second night of the play's production, as narrated on p. 103.

The benefit referred to in Mr. Phelps's letter to Mr. Macready of 21st July, 1853, and Mr. Macready's to Mr. Phelps of 22nd July, 1853, for the help of poor Mrs. Warner in her last hours did not take place at Drury Lane, but at Sadler's Wells. The play-bill is given on p. 419.

The *White Rose*, by the Rev. James White, and referred to in his letter of 24th November, 1847, was never acted, but Mr. Phelps produced on 6th March, 1852, White's tragedy of James VI., or the Gowrie Plot, as described at p. 124.—W. M. P.

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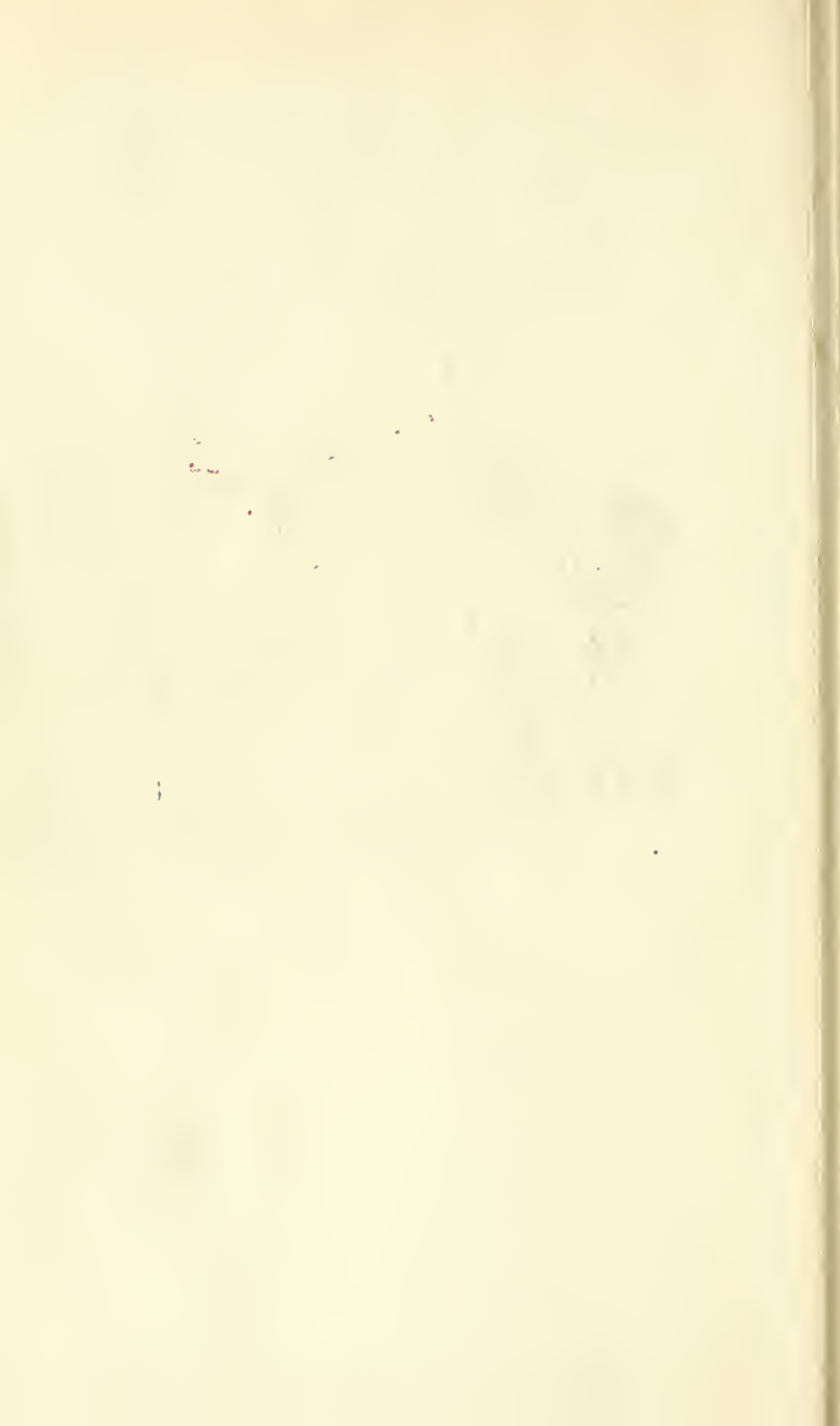
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THE END.







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